

# ANGLO- SOVIET JOURNAL

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# A HERO OF OUR TIME

Robert Daglish

On another page there is a discussion on the literary image of the young man of our time. We suggest that, in reading it, readers bear in mind this picture of Yuri Gagarin, the first man into space.

**I** WANT to fly to Mars or Venus. I want to do some real flying. I like it.' Three days before it would have sounded like a small boy boasting of what he was going to do when he grew up. When Major Gagarin said it at a press conference after his return from outer space, all of us, starry-eyed and hard-bitten alike, took it as a perfectly natural and feasible statement of his intentions, and we laughed in sheer wonder at the sudden change that had taken place in ourselves. The outer regions of the universe had drawn nearer and the world had become a smaller and perhaps more friendly place to live in.

Major Gagarin tells us there are many young pilots like himself who he thinks should out of fairness be given a chance to test their skill and endurance in space, but one cannot help feeling that the men who selected him for his historic mission chose exceptionally well. What kind of man did they choose?

He looks very young, even younger than his twenty-seven years. His manner is confident and yet absolutely devoid of pose. His answers to questions are lucid and direct; when describing his flight he is careful to stress what may be only a subjective impression (his feeling that he could have stayed in orbit much longer, for instance); there is no muddled introspection. His voice is young and fresh. He speaks in the idiom of Soviet education, yet every patriotic sentiment expressed in familiar terms has the essential element of sincerity. One can easily believe his statement that when his ship was leaving orbit to return to earth (at this point the smallest error could have caused a friction burn-up) he actually began to sing. Even when reproving the aristocrats abroad who have claimed him as a relative, or declining to answer a question on some matter that is obviously still top secret, his cheerful humour always breaks through. Yet for all his accomplishments of bravery, endurance and intelligence there is never any doubt but that he is just an ordinary Soviet person of modest origins. Even if we had not seen his mother, beshawled, a little embarrassed at all the honours, or his father, a farm carpenter if ever there was one, we could never have taken him for the son of a general or Academician. The facts of his biography bear this out.

Born in the village of Krushino, Gzhatsk District, about 120 miles west of Moscow, Yuri Gagarin had been attending school only a few months when his family was forced to evacuate to escape the advancing German armies. He did not resume his education proper until after the war, at the age of eleven. At seventeen he entered a trade school and learned foundry work. He finished his education at Saratov, combining work and study with membership of the local flying club. It was the existence of this club, its doors wide open to young workers like Gagarin, that changed the direction of what would probably have been a steady but less outstanding career as a steel worker or engineer. From the club his enthusiasm and skill took him through flying school at Orenburg, where he met the medical student who was to be his wife, and in 1957 he became a fighter pilot in the Soviet air force. Since then, as a space-flight volunteer, he has been undergoing training in centrifugal and vibrating apparatus that proved, in the event, to be far more arduous than the conditions of the actual flight. He has two daughters, one of them only a month old. His whole career is, in fact, one that accords with and justifies the new Soviet educational policy of more trust and encouragement for the worker at the bench.



At the time of writing, many details of the flight have not been released. We do not know exactly, for instance, how the landing took place. Academician Parin's article in *Literaturnaya gazeta*, April 15, would seem to imply that part of the descent was by parachute. Gagarin has not definitely confirmed this. He has said, however, that the spaceship he used is still intact and can be used again. But even the bare bones we have at present are enough to show that the value of sending a man into space has been distinctly underestimated by some of our own scientists. Perhaps the best reply to this question has been given by Academician Nesmeyanov, President of the Academy of Sciences: 'How could we hope to reach the planets', he asked the press, 'if we didn't put a man in space?' And turning to eager reporters near the platform, 'You, gentlemen, I see, are not content with mere photographs.'

Major Gagarin says that the conditions of flight were easier than what he had been through on the ground. That in itself is a good augury for space travel. He seems almost to have enjoyed the sensation of weightlessness and found it easy to consume from a tube the nutritious paste prepared for him by the Academy of Medical Sciences—water in a cup would have disintegrated into small drops, food on a plate would have floated away from him. Much of what he saw confirmed the predictions of Konstantin Tsiolkovsky (1857—1935), whom the Russians regard as the founder of their science of space travel.

The sky of the universe outside the earth's halo proved to be pitch black, the sun many times brighter, the stars (he did not see the moon) stereoscopically distinct. Through his thick glass porthole he could see the earth, its mountains, oceans, even large areas of ploughed land, almost as well as during stratosphere flights at a height of 15km. In his spaceship he was between 175 and 302km from the earth. He describes the halo round the earth with its gradations of light blue, ultramarine and violet as extremely beautiful, and the transition from day to night on entering the earth's shadow as sudden. Even during the flight his exclamation: 'Gosh, how beautiful!' could be heard on earth over the radio telephone.

Apart from the intrinsic scientific interest of these first human observations of space, the outstanding scientific fact, of particular interest to psychologists, is that the human mind, assailed by so many imponderable factors, could actually make these observations without becoming clouded by fear or other emotions. This was something that no scientific apparatus could prove. Now it has been proved by human experience, and a permanent new factor has entered the situation. All future space travellers will be armed with the knowledge that it has been done before.

It would be wrong to minimise the tremendous stress Gagarin had to endure from acceleration forces. Though he himself seems to make light of them, it would appear that only the fittest of men can stand the strain. But when considering the possibilities of further flights one cannot help referring to the press articles of the last few days, from which it emerges that the space suit with its interlinings and medical-observation transmitters, making it very much more cumbersome, was worn largely as a precautionary measure. The cabin of the spaceship was thermostatic and supplied with oxygen. The course of the flight was planned to avoid the influence of radio-active particles. If the danger of meteors can be similarly avoided, and the need for close medical observation becomes unnecessary, spacemen will be able to travel much more comfortably in the future. Of course, oxygen and food supply over long periods are as yet unsolved problems. There may be many more. Even so, there is much to lend weight to Academician Nesmeyanov's words that 'more than one swallow comes in spring.'

Whether one was in a laboratory watching recording instruments, or with the excited crowds in Gorky Street, or simply sitting at an office desk, it was an exceptional experience to be in Moscow on April 12, 1961. I happened to

be in an office, busy editing copy for a magazine with a deadline not far away, so I missed the tension in the streets and the first public rejoicing that broke out when the news was announced that Major Gagarin had returned safely to earth. But because I was with people I had known for years and had seen on similar, though less momentous, occasions, I felt just as deeply aware of what was going on and could appreciate just how much this breath-taking attempt meant to ordinary people doing an ordinary job like my own.

There was a small radio in the basement, and every now and then one of the girls from the next office would pop in to tell us 'he' was all right and the flight was proceeding normally ; and every now and then we would slip out to learn whether there had been any fresh announcement. Everybody was impressed by the fact that this was a 'live' broadcast, that the Government had decided not to wait till the flight was over before making an announcement. None of us had any idea how long it would last or how many times the spaceship was going to orbit the earth. In the intervals between each bulletin a few facts about the flight and its pilot came trickling through. We tried to guess the rest ourselves. Had he a wife and children ? Had she known what he was going to do ? (We learned later that she had). Was there a window in his spaceship or was he watching a television screen ? Somebody thought that no glass could stand the strain, then remembered the photographing of the moon. All of a sudden a violent argument broke out as to whether this could be considered a violation of foreign air space. Some said international law laid it down that air space extended vertically to infinity ; others that there had been an attempt to draw up space law but the matter had been left undecided. The argument was cut short by the announcement that the retro-engine had been switched on and the spaceship was coming down.

Now Major Gagarin is back on earth. The rejoicing has been greater than for May Day, the crowds that surged into Red Square were certainly larger. There has been a grand reception for him in the Kremlin. He has been awarded the titles of Hero of the Soviet Union and Soviet Space Pilot. At Scientists' House he was described as the Columbus of the cosmos. Yet for all this he still retains his charming and gentle modesty, which is recognised by all. It may be that besides his unique contribution to our understanding of the universe, by showing what qualities are needed in the new age Major Gagarin has helped us to a better understanding of ourselves.

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# OLD AND NEW TRADITIONS OF THE LENINGRAD BALLET

Natalia Roslavleva

**A**GRIPPINA VAGANOVA, one of the greatest ballet teachers of all times, started the preface to her famous book *Fundamentals of the Classic Dance* (1934)\* thus : ' We carefully preserve the classical dance, but I think that should Didelot, Taglioni-père, Perrot—in other words, those who propagated it in Russia—rise from their graves they would not recognise their offspring. Time does its work. Everything becomes perfected.' And a little farther on Vaganova explained the reason for the constant perfecting of her school : ' At present such an impetuous forward drive is an inevitability. We are moving together with the tempo of life.'

When I read (though admittedly now less frequently) that ' the tradition of the imperial ballet remains unbroken in Soviet ballet' or that 'the Petipa tradition has been preserved intact in Leningrad' and that for that very reason Soviet ballet has remained firmly planted in the pre-Fokine era, I think of the wise words of that wonderful woman whose friendship and confidence I was privileged to enjoy.

Yes, the Leningrad ballet is justly proud of being the keeper of the traditions of the Russian school. But do we maintain the traditions of the imperial ballet ? There are traditions and ' traditions.' While we carefully preserve and develop those that are best and fruitful, we have completely given up the obsolete and false ones.

In attempting to find a definition of the true essence of the Russian school it is no use trying to improve upon that of Pushkin, dropped by him almost casually among the stanzas of *Eugene Onegin* : ' Shall I ever see the Russian Terpsichore's soul-inspired flight ?' The poet's genius helped him to put into one sentence the very substance of the Russian school, and this definition is true to this day. Pushkin had in mind the graceful and lovely Avdotya Istomina, adorning ballets by Didelot. Already Landé, the first ballet master who undertook, upon the orders of empress Anna Ioanovna, to train children of her palace servants with the idea of forming a national company, observed the extraordinary inborn gifts of his pupils for dancing. Landé was not an outstanding teacher in any sense, but did his job honestly and thoroughly. The exceptional results, produced by only three years of schooling, when the newly trained Russian dancers were able to replace the Italian *corps de ballet* and soon competed with leading soloists, were explained by their qualities, directly acquired from the Russian national dance with its graceful and expressive movements of the **entire body**. Russian ballet made such strides that when Didelot came to Petersburg from London for the second time (in 1816) he had at his disposal a large company of outstanding talents and a national repertoire created by Ivan Valberg, who slowly but surely was moulding a truly national ballet.

Particularly important was the fact that the Petersburg ballet already had its definite tastes and predilections related to a preference for strong plots and serious content. Didelot made friends with the best of the Russian intelligentsia of the time. Pushkin, Griboyedov, the artist Orlovsky, and many of the future ' Decembrists' gave him advice and guidance, and he eagerly followed it. By the time of Valberg's death in 1819 Didelot was quite capable, in spite of the fact that he was a foreigner, of carrying on with the cause of building up a

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\* Published in English translation by Anatole Chujoy by A. & C. Black in 1946



national ballet in Russia—national not necessarily in subject, but in style and spirit. His Russian creations—*Raoul de Crequis*, *The Hungarian Hut* and *The Prisoner of the Caucasus* (after Pushkin's poem)—won him the name of 'Shakespeare and Byron in ballet'; and through these creations he became a direct precursor of the romantic ballet. In Didelot's time the Petersburg ballet made great progress, but how much he gained from working with a company of artists capable of giving life to his creations! The end of Didelot's life in Russia was unhappy—the management of the imperial theatres no longer had any use for his dramatic productions and was highly suspicious of the trend they represented. It wanted light entertainment, pageants and *féeries*.

The same happened to Jules Perrot—he spent the happiest years of his life in Petersburg, where he found an ideal vehicle for his artistic inclinations. In his Petersburg production of *Giselle* (1856) Perrot at last carried out some of the ideas he had conceived for that ballet but had never brought into effect in Paris, and therefore the *Giselle* produced by him in Petersburg had a greater portion of his choreography than the Grand Opera first production. The Russian dancers liked taking part in Perrot's ballets, with good plots and developing action expressed in dance and mime that gave plenty of chances to act. But this trend and the progressive ideas behind Perrot's ballets, that almost invariably had simple people of a brave and freedom-loving romantic spirit for heroes, were frowned upon by the imperial theatres. With great sadness Perrot parted with Russian ballet against his will. After his official dismissal he spent almost two years in Petersburg and Moscow, so great was his love for Russia.

The next important period in the Petersburg and Russian ballet is linked with the great ballet master Marius Petipa, in many ways Perrot's disciple. However, throughout Petipa's career the earnest and dramatic, the serious and poetic were ever fighting in him with the necessity to produce more and more pageants and *divertissements* for the entertainment of the Court. After all, *The Sleeping Beauty* was conceived both by Vsevolozsky and Petipa largely as a sumptuous pageant. It was the genius of Chaikovsky that opened up entirely new horizons for Russian ballet and brought universal fame to Petipa. The whole history of Russian ballet is intangibly bound with the development of Russian classical music—from Glinka's ballet scenes from *Ivan Susanin* and *Ruslan and Ludmila* to Chaikovsky. Before him it was thought sufficient for ballet music to provide suitable accompaniment. The appearance of Chaikovsky's symphonic music was equal to a revolutionary reform. It introduced large sweeping canvases and deep psychological characterisation that enabled one to understand more than could be said by dance alone. Petipa had spent over 40 years in Russia before meeting Chaikovsky as a collaborator. His choreographic imagination was limitless, his labour immense, and some fruits of his legacy were so precious that he is justly revered in the annals of Russian ballet. But Petipa was 66 when he collaborated with Chaikovsky, and the old ballet master said many times that Chaikovsky made him young again. Work with the composer inspired Petipa. His plans became more music-minded, and the actual choreography more musical. However, only Lev Ivanov was able fully to understand the riches of Chaikovsky's music.

It was Lev Ivanov who created the swan scenes in *Swan Lake*, building them on the same symphonic principles as the score. Dance formed an inseparable whole with the music and grew out of it. Lev Ivanov's symphonisation of the dance, first in the 'snowflakes' scene of the *Nutcracker* and then in *Swan Lake*, started a new era in Russian ballet. There is also good reason to suppose that Lev Ivanov, occupying the modest position of second ballet master to Petipa, choreographed the 'vision' scene from *The Sleeping Beauty*. In other words, there is no such thing as a wholesale Petipa tradition. It comprises in reality all that was done in Russian ballet before Petipa and all that the great master found around him in his time. He was always eager to learn, and, for instance,

not being as strong in male dancing as in composition of virtuoso *pas* for the ballerinas he would make a note in his diary : ‘ Don’t forget to visit Johansson’s class.’

Much misunderstanding is also connected with Johansson’s role and share in the forming of the Russian school. A Swede by birth, he was educated in the precepts of the Danish-French school. He came to Petersburg in 1841 as a *premier danseur*. A perfect technician, he was rather cold and danced like a machine. At an early stage he observed that the Russians had a special and very expressive manner of dancing.

He took great pains to find out the secret of this style and decided that it was born in the school and that the secret of success was concerned with the method of teaching. Johansson devoted **35 years** to study of the Russian method at the theatre school, and only then started teaching himself. His own system was an amalgamation of the best in the Russian, French and Danish schools, worked out after study of Russian teaching and Russian performance. That his method was good is proved by the extraordinary flowering of the Russian school of classical ballet at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. Johansson’s pupil Nicolai Legat added to the system some methods of the Italian school. He learnt all the tricks of Italian guest artists and taught them to Mathilde Kshessinskaya. Soon other Petersburg ballerinas knew the secret of multiple turns. Some, like Olga Preobrazhenskaya, studied with the celebrated Enrico Cecchetti. His system, while remaining strictly Italian, was also worked out after **30 years’** experience in Russia, and for the benefit of Cecchetti’s Russian pupils. There is no doubt that the Russian school enriched Cecchetti’s method.

With the final shaping of the Russian school there was formed a whole constellation of brilliant ballerinas—Preobrazhenskaya, Kshessinskaya, Pavlova, Karsavina, Siedova, Trefilova—and *premiers danseurs* like Gerdt, the brothers Sergei and Nicolai Legat, Nijinsky’s teacher Mikhail Obukhov, and many, many others. These dancers not only possessed brilliant technique, but, true to the traditions of Russian ballet, were capable of conveying dramatic conviction across the footlights and danced with their whole body and soul. And yet by the beginning of the twentieth century the imperial ballet of Petersburg was in a grave state of crisis. This is explained by the general stagnation that swept ballet the world over, turning it into a pleasant pastime with many spectacular effects and feats of dancing virtuosity that left the spectator’s mind and heart absolutely cold and indifferent. It is also explained by the fact that the imperial ‘tradition’ of treating ballet as a plaything of the Tsar’s retinue took particular hold of the imperial theatres at the time.

It was against this ‘tradition’ that Fokine and his predecessors and collaborators declared war. Fokine revolted against the routine, and rightly so. His reform was an historical necessity prepared by the entire development of Russian art. But he never had the intention of breaking with the **dancing** traditions of the Russian ballet, with the inspired, powerful and expressive style of the Russian school. Fokine broke with Diaghilev in 1912, not accidentally, but after *L’Après-midi d’un Faune*, for the reason that with it Diaghilev forsook the dancing traditions of the Russian ballet that Fokine never intended to give up. Fokine wanted to do much more than he actually had the chance to do. He thought that ballet must ‘contain its own truth of life if it is ever to have any value’. The best ideas of the Fokine reform, those that he himself was never able to achieve because he was deprived of the means, have been carried out in the Leningrad ballet.

In December 1917 the Mariinsky Theatre was by decree made the State Theatre of Opera and Ballet. Its doors were flung open to the workers. Of necessity the repertoire at first remained the same. I have in my possession the *Biryuch* (*Herald*) of the Petrograd State Academic Theatres for the season of

1919-20. It shows that the repertoire consisted of 18 old ballets—*The Sleeping Beauty*, *Swan Lake*, *Nutcracker*, *Raimonda*, *The Little Humpbacked Horse*, *Don Quixote*, *La Fille Mal Gardée*, *Esmeralda*, *Le Corsaire*, etc. Of the Fokine ballets only *Le Carnaval* was shown at the time, though in later seasons many of his creations were revived. It is worth noting which of the classics had survived. Spectacular divertissements ballets, such as *Barbe-Bleu* or *La Fille du Pharaon*, were gone. The new spectator himself made the choice of what he was to support. His choice evidenced good taste and a preference for works of lasting artistic value. Boris Asafiev, our eminent musicologist and composer, had a very interesting theory, according to which only that music survives over the centuries the intonations of which have a lasting appeal to the mind and heart. The people themselves decide what is to survive. The same applies to ballet, which has not only musical but choreographic ‘intonations’ that either pass the test of time or fail to do so. It is also interesting to observe that all the gems of the French classical repertoire were carefully preserved in the Petrograd ballet at a time when they had been forgotten in the country of their birth.

While the ballets were old, the way of dancing them was already new. In the early years of the revolution the former Mariinsky company (while many stars went abroad, an overwhelming majority of the company remained and many new ballerinas emerged from their ranks) tried to dance not for the sake of dancing, but to express the idea, the thought underlying the given work. They no longer attempted to dazzle and surprise the spectator by sheer technique, but, by using it as a means and not an end, tried to awaken responsive thoughts and emotions, thus lifting the audience to a higher spiritual plane. This was in line with the best in the Russian tradition, but it was given a new meaning and a new application. Soon the need arose to create new ballets with new heroes. These required greater characterisation, greater acting talents. Much more was expected now from the dancer, from the ranks of the *corps de ballet* to the ballerina.

In preparing the Leningrad ballet, for these new and responsible tasks much was done by Agrippina Vaganova. She created a whole company with a strong and uniform technique, which, while firmly embedded in the Russian school of the past, was expressive of the new times and the new requirements. Vaganova’s classical technique does not copy anyone and does not imitate any school. She studied the work of Soviet choreographers and borrowed freely from them. Her school, her technique, was in harmony with the heroic and exhilarating style of the new ballets. The first great Vaganova-trained ballerina was Marina Semyonova. Though a teacher of ballerinas only, Vaganova influenced the style of male dancing in the Leningrad ballet as well. The men also benefited from her method, the principles of which were supported by a serious scientific analysis and a deep study of the experience of all the Russian teachers before her. She was also endowed with an extraordinary ability to see **ahead** of the given stage of her school, and at 70 refused to stand still. Her book, however valuable, does not exhaust her method. She taught how to **dance** and not how to perform the steps of classical ballet. She expected her pupils to be always alert, to react quickly, to think, to participate in the **creative** work that daily occurred in her class.

The extremely fruitful period of the Leningrad ballet of the 1930s when it literally became the laboratory of Soviet ballet, creating a new heroic-dramatic style of production in *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*, *Flames of Paris*, *Laurencia*, *Heart of the Hills* and *Romeo and Juliet*, owes a great deal to Vaganova’s work. A company that had to dance in serious dramatic ballets expressing highly complex ideas and a great spiritual impact was perforce obliged to possess a technique on a level that would enable it to concentrate on characterisation without struggling with technical difficulties. Celebrated theatrical pro-

ducers—Sergei Radlov and Vladimir Solovyov—came to assist the young choreographers Zakharov, Lavrovsky and Vainonen. First-class dramatists like Nikolai Volkov and Yuri Slonimsky wrote ‘books’ for ballets that were beyond compare with the primitive plots of old. All this gave birth to a new type of dancer—the dancer-actor—a type that has become identified not only with the Leningrad but with all Soviet ballet. Foremost among these were Galina Ulanova and Konstantin Sergeyev, though there were many, many others. Ulanova’s extraordinary talent grew and matured with the development and maturity of the Leningrad ballet. Her first great flowering was as Maria in *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*, but her Juliet was yet another, much greater, stage of growth. It summed up the result of many years’ searching in Soviet ballet for the proper musical and choreographic interpretation of masterpieces of literature. To a certain extent the period of ‘dramatic ballets’ of the 1930s was responsible for the prevalence of pantomime over dancing in the Soviet choreography of the time; but the achievements of this period were greater than its weaknesses.

In creating its new repertoire the Leningrad ballet never forgot the classics. While carefully preserved, they were given a new lease of life through the fresh attitude to the very art of producing and presenting a ballet. The Chaikovsky classics had many different productions in Leningrad. When, after the war, the company returned in 1945 from Perm to the newly restored Kirov Theatre (it was badly damaged by bombs) the first ballet to be produced by Fedor Lopukhov was *Swan Lake*. He, incidentally, was the first to use unknown music, such as Rotbardt’s variation and the Prince’s song from the original score. In 1950 and 1952 Konstantin Sergeyev, artistic director of the Kirov Theatre ballet, carried out new revivals of *Swan Lake* and *The Sleeping Beauty*, bringing them much closer to the classic models of 1895 and 1890. But, while firmly linked with the tradition, these ballets were produced within the principles of Soviet ballet and a contemporary vision. All action is motivated. Truly in the tradition of the Russian school at its best the dancers do not dance to music. They dance **music**; and that is the whole secret of the Soviet school. The contemporary note is also introduced into these productions by the magnificent settings of Sulico Virsaladze—an artist whose work is identified with the style of Leningrad ballet. In his design Virsaladze always actively collaborates with the choreographer. This became particularly evident in the ballets done together with Yuri Grigorovich. In creating his own version of Prokofiev’s *Stone Flower* in 1958 this young choreographer (nephew of Rosai of the first Diaghilev seasons) demonstrated a style and method that is now becoming identified with contemporary Leningrad ballet. He choreographs on the symphonic principle of dance suites. His choreography is closely allied not only to Prokofiev’s music, but also to Virsaladze’s decor, making it play an active part in the production. All the contemporary works of Leningrad choreographers show a preference for dance as against mime. The period when everyday *mise en scene* gestures borrowed from the legitimate stage flourished in dramatic ballets, particularly the less successful ones, is gone, never to return. Equally gone is the *divertissement* construction of old ballets with their system of separate musical ‘numbers’ interrupted by pauses purposely created for applause. Dance in the works of Grigorovich and Igor Belsky—another gifted young Leningrad choreographer—takes the form of a continuous flow of action. All the key points of the plot are done in dance, while mime is its inseparable companion. Grigorovich’s new work, *Legend of Love*, to music by A. Melikov, is a large symphonic canvas subtitled ‘an heroic poem extolling the strength of the human spirit.’ The choreography, based on classical dance enriched by elements of national dancing, demands high professionalism from the dancers; and the remarkable Leningrad company, wherein innovation and tradition exist side by side, fully responded to this new test of its abilities.

Igor Belsky called his first ballet, *Coast of Hope*, a 'romantic poem'. Its idiom is modern, though firmly supported by classical technique. It is a very poetic work of great emotional impact, in which no attempt is made to present any detailed action. It is, indeed, a poem of patriotism, using highly metaphorical methods. This generalised style of choreography is contrasted by other ballets in the Leningrad repertoire—Konstantin Sergeyev's *Path of Thunder*, with its full-blooded, completely three-dimensional characters and a more detailed plot, or the monumental *Spartacus* of Leonid Yacobson to the marvellously colourful music of Khachaturyan. Following Fokine's precepts, the choreographer does not use any dancing *sur les pointes* and resorts to the plastic style of Greek *bas reliefs*. It is a pity that this work is not transportable—it takes the entire company and all the supers to put on such scenes as 'the triumph in Rome.'

A similarly spectacular work of tremendous emotional impact is Chabukiani's *Othello*, created by him in Tbilisi to Machavariani's music, and re-produced in Virsaladze's wonderful settings on the stage of the theatre where he was formed both as a dancer and choreographer.

In the last few years the Leningrad ballet has created so many new productions to music by Soviet composers, choreographed not only by the senior generation—Sergeyev, Fenster and Yacobson—but by newly born talents, that the 1960s may well become a new stage in its development equal to that of the famous '30s. One thing is certain—the Leningrad ballet with its galaxy of *maitres de ballet* and company of dancers—from the brilliant *prima ballerina* Natalia Dudinskaya to the youthful Alla Sizova, from the great *premier danseur* Konstantin Sergeyev to Rudolf Nureyev, of whom much is yet expected—continues to be the pride of Soviet ballet and its valuable laboratory of daring choreographic experimentation.

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## Gramophone Records

### NEW PROKOFIEV ARRIVALS

Frank Merrick

**Prokofiev: Piano Sonata No. 7, in B flat; op. 83. Musorgsky: Pictures at an Exhibition.** Played by Svyatoslav Richter. (Artia, ALP 154, 39/9.)

**Prokofiev: Piano Concerto No. 4 (for the Left Hand); op. 53.** Anatol Vedernikov and the USSR State Orchestra, conducted by Leo Ginzberg.

**Prokofiev: Piano Concerto No. 2 in G Minor; op. 16.** Yakov Zak, with the USSR State Orchestra, conducted by Kurt Sanderling. (Artia, ALP 166, 39/9.)

**I**N the Prokofiev Sonata, which is perhaps the most forbidding of all the nine, it is to be gratefully welcomed that the slow expressive passages are treated with the loving sympathy they really need. For the idea that such passages should be drily presented the composer himself was partly responsible, wishing (as he explained) that the music should not be thought sentimental. This may



well have been due to the same sensitivity which made him complain when some of his work was called grotesque, which seems to one of his admirers an apt word to describe various fascinating stretches in his compositions. But if his playing was regrettably dry in England in the '30s, it is comforting to learn that it was more appealing in later years, and his conducting in those same '30s was as expressive as one might expect from the subtle and telling directions in his printed works.

The word *andantino* is often a source of controversy, and I think Richter's very slow pace for the *andantino* sections of the first movement lessens the unity of the movement without really adding to the wistful pathos of those sections. His extreme mastery regarding technical difficulties enables him to play the finale without any slowings down in the last page but one, with the curious result that it prevents listeners who do not play the work from knowing in how many different places the composer expects the player's hands to be at almost the same moment at a recurrent nightmare point.

With anyone as famous as Richter there is a danger that people will accept everything he does, which must be my excuse if it seems churlish to grumble at a few disappointments in Musorgsky's *Pictures* instead of pointing out the many excellencies. But does he not fail to perceive some of the composer's most subtle characterisations? In the first and later loud 'promenades', for instance, he makes the visitor to the gallery march to and fro with stern and unrelenting determination. Surely an easier and more casual wandering would give the impression intended. The 'Polish wagon' would be more credible if represented by a dull wearisome thudding instead of constant and heavy hammer strokes. The speed of his 'market women' is more like the extremely skilled rapidity of a brilliantly executed patter song than the chattering (however excited) in a crowd; while in the final passage of the same piece the listener cannot at that pace be aware that the hands are playing alternately.

Of course, the whole performance is masterly in execution, and if there is not space to mention more than one special beauty let it be the lovely imitations of unaccompanied choral singing in the final 'picture.'

Copies of Prokofiev's LH Concerto are not yet obtainable in England, which temporarily adds to the interest of this work in its recorded form. The soloist plays with considerable variety of expression, and all the rapid passages of single notes at the beginning and end are quite free from that suggestion of Czerny practice at its driest from which we so often suffer.

I do not think the record of the second concerto will help many listeners with this work. I have listened to it several times with the music in my hand. Both the tonal balance and recording are so inadequate that numerous important things are either inaudible or too faint to be heard against a very confused background. The pianist seems to have really executed the notes, but with far too little finesse. The syllables of melodies are painfully uniform in quantity, loud chords are so insensitively proportioned that they often amount to an unmeaning crash, and some directions of the composer are ignored, such as *con eleganza* at sign 7 and the staccatos at sign 100.

Let us hope for some live performances of these Prokofiev works in London.

These two records are from over 2,500 of the entire USSR catalogue now made available for the first time in Britain by Associated Recordings Ltd., a newly formed British company which negotiated the agreement with Mezhdunarodnaya Kniga jointly with its American associates, the Recording Artists Music Corporation. The records are being marketed under Artia and Parliament labels. In addition a large recording programme of international repertoire is planned.

# NOTES OF A BALLET CONDUCTOR

Yuri Faier

In this issue we conclude our excerpts from the memoirs of the conductor of the Bolshoi Ballet, begun in our Spring number.

I MET the leading composers, but these meetings were not in the way of 'social contact,' but for the purposes of work, at times difficult work, with quarrels, sharp clashes, and an intense search for the truth. And foremost in my memory are the meetings with the wonderful Soviet composer Sergei Prokofiev.

The score of *Romeo and Juliet* was written right under my eyes. Prokofiev came to Moscow in the '30s and while staying at the National Hotel, worked on this ballet, intended for the Bolshoi Theatre. He often invited me to his hotel and showed me the pages he had completed. The work was very unusual, quite unlike customary ballet music, yet nevertheless unusually attractive in its sincerity, emotionalism and passionately true feeling. Sergei Sergeivich hated idle questions, like 'And what does this mean?' and 'What did you want to say by this musical phrase?' He rightly assumed that music must in a general way embody the main idea of the original literary work and its characters' main features, and do it in such a manner that their thoughts and emotions, however remote they may be from us in time, should deeply move present-day audiences.

The day came when Prokofiev brought the score of *Romeo and Juliet* to the Bolshoi. Nearly every member of the ballet company gathered in the dark-red Beethoven hall. Prokofiev was pale but outwardly calm. Few could observe his emotion. As he played, the number of his listeners dwindled. Most of them did not understand Prokofiev's music. They said that it was unthinkable to dance to such music, that nothing like it had ever been known in ballet previously, and could never be. The theatre turned down *Romeo and Juliet*.

Prokofiev was not one of those who give in. He continued to make his ballet known to musicians. Some considered the music candid, others a mockery of the laws of dancing. What could be done? Works of art which contain new ideas do not always find immediate general acceptance.

The ballet was put on at the Kirov Theatre in Leningrad. Sergei Radlov, the librettist, Leonid Lavrovsky, the ballet master, one of the most talented directors of our day, and Peter Williams, the artistic director, created a spectacle which has become an adornment of the Soviet ballet repertoire.

The persons responsible for this production and the performers in it brought Prokofiev's music to many thousands of theatre-goers. Everyone admitted that the theatre had not known such a real and poetic Juliet as that of Galina Ulanova. Her appearance in this production during the ten-day Festival of Leningrad Theatres in Moscow, shortly before the war, turned into a triumph.

What makes Prokofiev's music so compelling? For me, as a conductor, it is first of all its symphonic qualities and, consequently, the depth and universality of its content. The ballets of Chaikovsky and Glazunov have this quality. At the same time there is in Prokofiev's music that concrete imagery, that dramatic logic, which are essential to every stage production. You have only to listen to the theme of the young girl, Juliet, to be able to imagine clearly the heroine's appearance at the beginning of the tragedy: the naïveté and grace of the music perfectly convey the mood of the cloudless girlhood of Shakespeare's heroine.

The virile and fiery tenderness of Romeo, the angry absurdity and maliciousness of Tybalt, the kindness and daring of Mercutio are all expressed by Prokofiev in Shakespearian fashion, concretely and richly, with Shakespearian depth.

After this highly successful production in Leningrad, years passed before the

Bolshoi Theatre returned to this ballet and again there were clashes with the composer. Taking certain acoustical features of our auditorium into account, we asked Prokofiev to reorchestrate it slightly.

Like all great artists, the composer was not very tractable. I, who was fortunate enough to work with him a great deal and, despite everything, was on friendly terms with him, still remember the quarrels and our search for new qualities in the dance features of the characters in the ballet. I never tried to 'overwhelm' the composer with my knowledge of the specific choreographic requirements of the Bolshoi. But the old proverb 'Truth is born out of conflict' once more proved true in our joint work; together we searched and discussed (at times to the limits of passion). Art benefited from this.

It was the same with Prokofiev's ballet *Cinderella*. When the composer brought the score to the theatre, producer Rostislav Zakharov and I thought it was not quite suitably orchestrated; the production was conceived as a festive, fairylike spectacle. We could scarcely persuade the composer that this required different instrumentation.

On this occasion we had to convince him at the rehearsals themselves. Prokofiev had a favourite phrase: 'Once a thing is done, it should be presented in that form. If you don't want to present it—then there's no need to.' I admit that, even when I did not agree with him, his enviable firmness and the rare strength of his inner conviction of his own rightness always vanquished me. How often nowadays, when observing the incomprehensible compliance of authors, the attitude of 'whatever you like' in connection with the theatre, I remember with delight the 'difficult', 'headstrong' Prokofiev.

Yes, Prokofiev knew what he wanted. Even when the gifted Ulanova asked him to give *Cinderella* the fascinating, tender and vibrant theme of the fairy-beggar he would not comply.

And what of the orchestration? We were, I repeat, able to achieve something at rehearsals, for it was impossible to persuade him with words. He would come in and listen to the music in its original orchestration. As it resounded through our huge theatre, we explained what was supposed to be happening at each given moment on the vast stage, and gradually the composer gave way to this persuasion. At last the score acquired its present form, and the ballet was staged. To this day this is one of the Bolshoi's best productions. Not long before Prokofiev's death, after a visit to see *Cinderella*, he sent the ballet master a congratulatory telegram which we preserve in our museum.

Besides Prokofiev, I had the good fortune to work with many Soviet composers who have made a great contribution to the development of modern ballet. These were A. Krein, composer of the epic folk ballet *Laurencia*; V. Oransky, whose ballets *Three Stout Men* and *The Footballer* were performed in our theatre in Igor Moiseev's excellent production; S. Vasilenko, with whom Kasyan Goleizovsky, the outstanding, daring ballet master, and I created an evening of two short ballets: *Theolinda* on a Schubert theme arranged by S. Vasilenko and *Joseph the Magnificent* to his own music.

I treasure the memory of my meetings with B. Asafiev during our work together on *The Flames of Paris*, in which the youthful V. Vainonen danced a bold and interesting part, and on *The Fountain of Bakhchiseraï*, which became an event thanks to the genius of Ulanova.

I remember the first time Reingold Moritseovich Glière came to our theatre. At that time we had the idea of producing Pugnî's *Esmeralda* (based on Victor Hugo's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*) in a new version, orchestrating the music afresh and making it sound richer and more emotional.

For instance, we wanted the solemn, mournful sounds of the organ of Notre Dame and the sad singing of the pure childish voices to be clearly heard in the scene of the execution procession—in other words, we wanted the music of the final scene to correspond more closely to what was happening on the stage.

The revival of 'old' works, not belonging to the classics but not deserving to be relegated to the archives, was vitally necessary in those years. The new Soviet repertoire was not created all at once, but the fresh audiences coming to the theatre demanded significant, bright productions from us. It was necessary to make *Esmeralda*, in which protest is expressed against the despotism, hypocrisy and inhumanity of the powers that be, just such a production.

But who could accomplish this ? Immediately I thought : Glière. He was already well known as an exceptionally gifted and experienced composer. However, having heard my proposal, Reingold Moritsevich categorically refused : 'Now, what connection have I with ballet ?' he asked 'I really know nothing about it.' He kept making excuses till I dragged him along to Malinovskaya, then director of the Bolshoi Theatre. This exceptional woman, who always came to meet us half-way in all our creative ventures, managed to persuade Glière to undertake the proposed work. So began his friendship with the Bolshoi Theatre, which proved to be extremely fruitful.

Glière became a ballet composer and wrote *The Red Poppy*, the first really successful Soviet ballet on a modern theme.

Even now I remember with what zeal we all worked on this production—the composer, the conductor, V. Tikhomirov, the ballet master, M. Kurilko, the artistic director and librettist, E. Geltser, the leading ballerina, and the other artists. If only we all always worked with our maximum effort on the creation of modern themes today ! If only we talked less about it and did more, **worked** more, how many modern ballets there would already be !

The finale in the first act of *The Red Poppy* was to conclude with an international sailors' dance and a dance of Soviet seamen. The composer wrote fine music for this scene, but we all, including the composer himself, felt that there was something unsatisfactory about it. We racked our brains to find words to explain to each other what we wanted from the music, but apart from 'fire, fire' we could think of nothing.

I had a sudden idea, but was a long time in deciding to tell it to the composer : it seemed daringly primitive. However, one day, almost stuttering, I timidly suggested to Glière : 'Suppose we use the popular sailors' song *Little Apple*, which is being sung at every street corner, in the seamen's dance ?'

Glière was silent as he knitted his thick, shaggy brows. They all but covered his luminous eyes that so often smiled, and I became utterly shy. 'There now, I have offended him', I thought. 'I have offended and insulted his aesthetic feeling, shocked his delicate taste.' And what right had I to aspire to counsel him ? Really, a street song and—a ballet ! Glière left the rehearsal without saying a word to me.

He did not appear in the theatre again for several days. I was in despair. I convinced myself that it was better to let well alone, that in the last resource it could be danced to the music already written ; and moreover that it was really quite good music.

In this way I worried and conjured up all sorts of fears, until Reingold Moritsevich arrived with a new part of the score. It was the finale of the first act—the dance *Little Apple*.

It is impossible for me to describe how the performers in the ballet and, later, the public received it from the very first. Never again have I heard such applause at a ballet. The fiery dance, full of fervour, optimism and vitality, was regarded as a symbol of the birth of a new element in ballet. The search for it continues to this day. Our audiences want to see modern people on the ballet stage. I believe that the great Soviet composers—Shostakovich, Khachaturyan, Kabalevsky, and talented young composers—will help to solve this task in a worthy manner, and I shall still have the joy of conducting remarkable ballets on a modern theme.

THERE are more than 55 ballets in my repertoire. Among them are many classics. For me—a great lover of classical music—it is very difficult to give preference to any one composer of the past or to any one composition.

From my point of view Chaikovsky's best ballet is *The Nutcracker*. For more than half a century I have been conducting ballets, and for me each new performance of *The Nutcracker* is a great joy.

For some time *The Nutcracker* has not been performed in Moscow. I cannot be reconciled to this state of affairs at all. How is it possible to deprive ballet artists of the opportunity of growing up and perfecting themselves in this work ; to deprive the orchestra of a school through which they must pass, from the beginning as it were, at each performance ; and, finally, to deprive visitors to our theatre of the opportunity of seeing and hearing such a ballet ?

Recently I had the good fortune to conduct another of Chaikovsky's ballet masterpieces—*Swan Lake* in Peter Ilyich's (the composer's) own original edition. We recorded this work for the radio as Chaikovsky composed it, without any cuts, without transposing individual numbers. My opinion is that this is the way the ballet should be presented on the stage as well. Let it take four hours. I assure you the public will not get bored, provided ways are found of presenting it which are congenial to the original score.

*The Sleeping Beauty* was presented at the theatre with a slight change in the order of the numbers. But here, in my opinion, the 'liberties' we took were justified. With all due reverence to the name and music of Chaikovsky, we allowed ourselves a little 'arbitrariness', and this is the reason why : as is well known, this ballet ends with a hymn-march in honour of the king. The music of the hymn, unfortunately, has little relation to the score as a whole. Perhaps such an apotheosis was written as a tribute to the pomposity of the imperial stage. It seemed to us a hundred times more justified to conclude the spectacle with the theme of the fairy-siren, for it is this theme which expresses the main idea of the story—the victory of good over evil. *The Sleeping Beauty*, for some reason, has disappeared from our posters. It is essential to fill this gap in the repertoire of the greatest Russian theatre of opera and ballet !

For more than four years there has been no performance of *Raimonda*. Now it has returned to the stage of the Bolshoi. I want to believe that it has returned for good, for such a ballet should always be in our repertoire, and preferably in the production which Glazunov himself had in mind.

I admit that I am partial to *Raimonda*. Any and every musician and ballet lover will understand this partiality. But there are personal reasons for it : it was when we were presenting *Raimonda* on June 22, 1925, that I met its composer, Glazunov, at the performance. It was probably for this reason that it went off exceptionally well and that the Bolshoi Theatre orchestra sounded particularly harmonious and inspired. I felt very happy when the composer presented me with his portrait and an excerpt from the variation in the second act. 'This is the theme of the horn, which I like very much myself', said Glazunov.

On that memorable June evening, I was actually making Glazunov's acquaintance for the second time. However, the celebrated composer probably did not even remember our first meeting. It took place several years before the ballet I have mentioned, in Petrograd. I was commissioned by the Bolshoi Theatre to approach him with a view to persuading him to write new music to the ballet of *The Little Humpbacked Horse*. This Russian fairy tale, sarcastically ridiculing the tsars and their hangers-on and glorifying the keen wit, bravery and humour of a simple lad, could not help but arouse the interest of the new audiences. But Pugni's stylised music very poorly expressed the substance of Ershov's work, so we wanted Glazunov to make possible the rebirth of the fairy tale on the stage.

Unfortunately my mission was a failure. Glazunov said that Pugni's *The*



*Little Humpbacked Horse* had already gained popularity. It was loved by the public and it was not necessary to rewrite it. 'There are many Russian fairy tales', he remarked, 'which have not yet been used in ballet, and, generally speaking, there are many new themes.'

It was difficult to quarrel with Glazunov, so I returned to Moscow without having accomplished my task.

Chopin and Liszt, Schubert and Schumann, Beethoven and Wagner, Mozart and Grieg, Musorgsky and Borodin—it is difficult even to name all the composers to whose music Soviet ballet masters have created choreographic productions. I want to stress that from the beginning of the Soviet period of choreography they have always tried to create ballets of the utmost significance and classical music has been their constant companion. Fairly recently ballets and concert numbers have been set to the music of Bach and Rachmaninov, Debussy and Medtner, Glinka and Ravel. On the whole these have been successful works. It is essential that the best of these should see the footlights of the Bolshoi ; I feel that our ballet masters must use the classics more boldly and more frequently.

**A**LL my observation of life indicates that there are two types of ballet conductor. The first type considers it his only duty to see that the orchestra players perform their parts accurately, and that they can play the score correctly, musically, and rhythmically accurately with the smallest number of rehearsals. He sees his specific task to consist only in accuracy and clarity of rhythm.

Yes, the conductor is obliged to achieve what is reasonable for the performer to dance to. This is his most essential, but also most elementary duty. But it is not this particularly which defines the true value of the director of the orchestra in ballet.

The second type of conductor is, above everything, an excellent musician, knowing how to reveal the content of the music and its dance features deeply and sensitively. He must know not only the music score, but also the choreographic score, so difficult to fix in one's mind. He must study all the richness and variety of the language of the classic dance, all the infinite possibilities of combining various steps in consequential, logically developing musical action and dance. It is very good when the conductor begins work on the ballet at the stage when the libretto is being written. Ideally he is not only a more or less talented performer, but also one of the creators of the ballet, able to make many suggestions to both the composer and the ballet master.

The ballet conductor must have a clear idea of each performer's part. As much as the performer (ideally even better) he must remember the whole 'dance text' of the role—movement after movement. He should know the possibilities of each dancer, male and female, and be able to suggest to them the type of performance which would bring out the strong side of their talent and hide the weak. Most important of all is his love for the art of ballet ; the desire and **ability** to give his time, his soul and his life to ballet.

Charles Munch, who appeared in Moscow with the incomparable Boston Orchestra, wrote in his book *I Am a Conductor*, that 15 years of study and work do not make a conductor out of a man if he is not possessed by inner delight, an all-consuming flame and magnetic force capable of mastering the orchestra players and the audience.

I put my signature to this wholeheartedly. Yes, the conductor must possess a force capable of controlling the orchestra and the public. But for the ballet conductor this is not enough. He must also know how to control the stage, control it not like a dictator or a despot, but like the dancer's best friend, who always helps him out and supports him at a difficult moment.

Such is the ideal. I cannot say today that I have achieved it. But when you succeed in coming even a little closer to this ideal you experience an incomparable feeling of satisfaction and joy. For the sake of this I still continue to learn, after more than forty years as a ballet conductor and more than half a century as a musician

I am not ashamed to admit this, for I believe that it is shameful for an artist to consider himself a perfect artist. With such a point of view, there is really nowhere to go and nothing to learn.

They say that talent is a gift of nature. But this gift will perish if it is not continually developed. So I study as I used to do. I study by listening to music performed by other conductors. I study by getting to know new pieces by Soviet and foreign composers. I study by examining for myself each of my performances, analysing its pluses and minuses, trying to find a way to eliminate clichés.

It is only possible to rid oneself of clichés, to find something new in art, by always working and always learning from life, from people, near to you in your common pursuits and others quite removed from them, for in every person there is something of his own, something individual which you have not got ; to learn from life, knowing that the meaning of life lies in serving the people.

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Translated by S. M.

## Note for Readers and Subscribers

**W**E regret that with this issue the price of the **ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL** must be raised to 3/6. For nearly 15 years the price of the **JOURNAL** has remained unchanged, but steadily rising costs have made an increase necessary in order to maintain its size and quality.

The current subscriptions of members and subscribers will be honoured at the old rate until expiry.

New subscriptions to the **JOURNAL** will be at the following rates :

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**London and Home Counties 23/- per annum ; provinces 17/6 per annum ; students 13/6 per annum.**

# CULTURAL RELATIONS AND PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE

G. A. Zhukov

As readers will remember, an Anglo-Soviet conference on peaceful co-existence was held at Wilston House on February 23-26 between delegations from the Great Britain-USSR Association and the USSR-Great Britain Society. In this article we reproduce the contribution made by the Chairman of the State Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, who was a member of the Soviet side. Though many references have been made to this speech in the press, the text has not hitherto been available.

I HOPE nobody in this hall will question the tremendous and positive part that can be played by the development of international cultural relations and the exchange of objective and trustworthy information. This can be particularly important in strengthening peaceful co-existence, which, I should like to believe, is supported by all present here today.

Our immediate purpose, therefore, is not to prove that fat is greasy and water wet, but to think of ways and means of extending our effort in this field, of organising cultural relations and co-operation in the sphere of information in such a way that it will bring the greatest benefit to the cause of co-existence.

The Soviet Committee for Cultural Relations has set itself the aim of promoting such relations in every possible way. I must say that this is a struggle, and no easy one, for in this world of ours there are still too many deep-rooted prejudices and suspicions that hamper contacts between us, and that, at times form a very real 'iron curtain'. I would remind you that it took almost four years to establish cultural relations with Britain. You will probably remember that the then Soviet Minister for Culture, Nikolai Mikhailov, came to your country as long ago as February 1956 for the purpose of establishing such relations, but it was not until the end of 1959 that we succeeded in concluding the first state agreement on cultural exchanges. Since then things have been going more smoothly, although I suppose I should touch wood in saying so !

CULTURAL relations between countries with different social systems are of particular significance. It is our opinion that free and extensive cultural exchanges constitute one of the most important means of ending the cold war and ensuring peaceful competition and co-operation on a world-wide scale.

I think it would be in place here to mention the positive results accruing from cultural exchanges between the Soviet Union and Great Britain. Visits of theatrical companies and individual artists from our two countries, exchanges of book exhibitions and exhibitions of the visual arts, and the organisation of Soviet and British film festivals have done a great deal to acquaint our two peoples with each other's culture. Scientific relations, especially between the Academy of Sciences of the USSR and the Royal Society, have had definite, practical results. The joint conference of Soviet and British historians in Moscow last autumn had considerable scientific interest, and exchanges of undergraduate and post-graduate students for lengthy periods of study have become traditional.

Mass organisations—youth, women's, sport and others—occupy a notable place in the relations established between our countries, and special mention must be made of the important part played in their development by the numerous Soviet societies for friendship and cultural relations with various foreign countries, societies which have now been formed into a union. In 1960, the Union of Soviet Societies of Friendship maintained contacts in 118 countries, co-operating with various organisations, scientific and cultural bodies and institutions and with individuals working in the world of science and culture.

I must say, however, that there are still obstacles that hamper the all-round development of broad cultural relations with capitalist countries. We still hear frightened voices exclaiming : ' The Soviet Union is mounting a cultural offensive ! ' ; ' The Soviet Union wants scientific relations in order to steal our industrial secrets ! ' (incidentally, when I came to London in November 1959 to negotiate with Mr. Allen on a cultural agreement, some of your newspapers said that Zhukov had come to steal industrial secrets) ; ' Keep Soviet artists out—they bring dangerous influences along with them ! '

Whenever I hear such voices I feel like saying : ' Gentlemen, isn't it time you got rid of that inferiority complex ? There's nothing to fear in cultural exchanges because our exchanges are a two-way street ; is it not at last time to realise that cultural exchanges are not and must not be a cold-war battlefield, but a means of promoting peaceful international co-operation for the purpose of solving the most urgent problems of public welfare, health, education and culture ? Why shouldn't we unite our efforts in the fight to eradicate epidemic diseases, tuberculosis, cardio-vascular diseases, and cancer ? In recent years far-reaching bilateral co-operation in this field has been established between the USSR, the USA and France. Why is it that we still have no similar agreement with Britain ? '

You have probably heard of the fruitful joint work that has been done in the fight against poliomyelitis, by the American scientist Sabin and Soviet scientists. For a long time Sabin's experiments were regarded with scepticism in the United States, while prominence was given to Salk's vaccine, which, incidentally, did not prove effective enough. Our scientists Chumakov and Smorodintsev, who were working on the same lines as Sabin, recognised the rational kernel of his work. They boldly entered into co-operation with him, with the result that injections of the ' new vaccine ' have been carried out on a mass scale in the Soviet Union. In the course of one year 77,000,000 people, of ages ranging from six months to 55 years, were given the vaccine, and our specialists now believe that polio will soon be a disease of the past, obliterated, like small-pox and bubonic plague, by human effort. This is surely a splendid example of the effectiveness of international cultural co-operation.

Last year the USSR concluded agreements with the USA and France on the peaceful uses of atomic energy, and these are now bearing good fruit. I hope that we shall be able to arrange equally fruitful co-operation with the scientists of Great Britain.

**L**ET us be quite frank ; in some places, particularly in those special bodies set up in the West to conduct ' psychological warfare ' against us, the least possible interest is displayed in such constructive forms of international cultural co-operation. The hard-boiled cold war experts who work in these bodies have their minds set on other things—how to use the channels of cultural exchanges, and the exchange of information in particular, to carry the cold war into the territories of the socialist countries, to undermine our camp from within.

And there are some people who, to cover up their own deeds, accuse us of doing what they themselves do. This, apparently, is the reason for the terrific

hullabaloo that has been raised for some time about our 'not playing fair' when we assert that peaceful co-existence between states with different social systems does not imply any conciliation in ideology.

There are some too, the esteemed Sir William Hayter in particular, who confuse questions of the ideological struggle with those of relations between states, in order to depict the Soviet Union as an aggressive power. In his speech at Leeds University on February 14 he said that peaceful co-existence means a situation in which communism, which cannot conduct a major war (but can conduct a minor one), will strive to destroy the non-communist social systems. Everything here is upside down—Sir William equates state relations with the struggle of ideas.

As Mr. Khrushchov emphasised as long ago as the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party :

'When we say that the socialist system will win in the competition between the two systems—the capitalist and the socialist—this by no means signifies that its victory will be achieved through armed interference by the socialist countries in the internal affairs of the capitalist countries. Our certainty of the victory of communism is based on the fact that the socialist mode of production possesses decisive advantages over the capitalist mode of production. . . . We believe that all working people in the world, once they have become convinced of the advantages communism brings, will sooner or later take the road of struggle for the construction of socialist society. Building communism in our country, we are resolutely against war. We have always held, and continue to hold, that the establishment of a new social system in one or another country is the internal affair of the peoples of the countries concerned. This is our attitude, based on the great Marxist-Leninist teaching.'

Yes, we have declared, and we declare again, honestly and openly, that the peaceful co-existence of *ideas* is as nonsensical as fried snowballs. The great strength of progressive ideas lies in their ability to live, struggle and conquer, irrespective of whether or not that is to the liking of those who do not profess them. Today even many bourgeois writers admit that talk about the notorious 'hand of Moscow' organising revolutions all over the world is a childish fable.

But the healthy and natural process of the development and struggle of ideas, the maturing of human consciousness in the transition from a lower stage of social development to a higher, is one thing ; attempts to implant some idea or another from outside, to smuggle it in, or forcefully stuff people's ears with what they do not wish to hear, are something else.

We have said before, and we repeat : we are against the export of revolution, but we are also against the export of counter-revolution—every nation must decide for itself which is the best way to live, so let us not interfere with the way people think and struggle for their own ideas.

Nevertheless, representatives of the western powers still hanker after propaganda centres on our territory, centres from which they could freely distribute newspapers, magazines, etc., containing anti-Soviet propaganda. We are forthright about this : do not waste your efforts, gentlemen, we do not intend to make such concessions to anybody, especially in the realm of ideology.

Attempts to use international cultural relations for the purpose of imposing on the people of another country ideas that are alien and even hostile to them—that is to say to apply the Trojan horse tactic, to act in a spirit of subversion—are all grist to the mill of the cold war. We do not want the cold war boosted ; we want it stopped completely.

**W**HEN our Prime Minister, Mr. Khrushchov, spoke in Los Angeles on September 19, 1959, during his visit to the USA, this is what he said to leading US statesmen : 'Let us not hide our faces. You are



representatives of the capitalist world ; we are representatives of the socialist world. Therefore, not all our literature is suitable for you, nor all yours for us. Let us speak openly of this. We are in favour of the exchange of cultural values, but of an exchange that will improve relations and not worsen them. . . . We stick to this rule : you offer us your “ goods ” and we make a selection and buy what we want. For our part we make our offer, buy what ever you like. If you don't like our goods, don't buy ! ’

We are in favour of the exchange of cultural values, but in a way that will improve and not worsen relations. But do many of the BBC broadcasts in Russian serve that purpose ? Unfortunately I have to answer this question very definitely in the negative. Those who arrange the BBC Russian programmes broadcast crude, anti-Soviet statements, attacks on our country, ridiculous and clumsy fabrications of a provocative nature. Slandorous inventions are presented as the true intentions of the Soviet Government.

In a talk with your ambassador to Moscow, I mentioned the following example. On July 12 of last year a BBC report alleged that the Soviet mission in Leopoldville was engaged in subversive activity. In actual fact there was no Soviet mission of any kind—permanent or temporary—anywhere in the Congo at that time. Why was that obvious invention broadcast ? Perhaps you believe that such fabrications are necessary to give Soviet listeners ‘ an idea of the British point of view on world events. ’ And what was the value of the BBC's assertion that the trip made by the aged Patriarch Alexius of Moscow and all Russia was aggression in the Middle East ? The BBC broadcast that statement in Russian on December 4, 1960. And you would like Russian people to show respect for your reports. I must tell you that, after that shameful report, we received hundreds of letters from religious people asking us to jam such lying statements by the BBC.

Perhaps that is what you want, Mr. Greene. You will not achieve it, however hard you may try. We shall remain true to our gentlemen's agreement with Sir Patrick Reilly, however great the provocation of those whose broadcasts have as little resemblance to the samples of the BBC's ‘ new style ’ offered us by Sir Patrick a year ago as chalk has to cheese. Incidentally, fulfilling the wishes of the Soviet public, we were compelled to jam 17 per cent of the BBC broadcasts in December, but that percentage was reduced to 14 in January. On some days there was no more than five to seven per cent, while on January 18 there was no jamming at all.

At times it seems that the BBC leadership is beginning to understand the aims of constructive exchange of information, and on those occasions their broadcasts are tactful and reasonable. Then suddenly there is a relapse ; British broadcasts sink into the gloom of the cold war, and Soviet people are again forced to slam the window.

Such was the case on January 14 and 16, when the BBC, on the pretext of informing Soviet people of ‘ British public opinion ’ concerning the plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, poisoned the ether with foolish and slanderous attacks on Prime Minister Khrushchov. The same is true of February 1 and 2, when the BBC twice broadcast in Russian Lord Hailsham's gross attacks on us, in particular the false and insulting assertion that the Communist Parties of other countries are ‘ under the control of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union ’, that this is the mechanism of communist imperialism, which constitutes the greatest menace to human freedom—and a lot more delirious talk of this kind. The same thing is happening today—the BBC is heaping calumny on us in connection with the events in the Congo. When one hears such broadcasts one might think that we, and not the agents of the colonialists, were responsible for the brutal murder of Patrice Lumumba, thereby causing the sharp aggravation of the situation in that long-suffering country.

‘WHY do you jam scandal-mongers ? Let listeners themselves switch off their receivers’, people often say to us. Whenever I hear such advice I recall the argument between Prime Minister Khrushchov and reactionary American trade union leaders, who also pretended to be the most ardent champions of absolute, untrammelled freedom.

‘There is no getting away from it : we have different conceptions of freedom,’ said Khrushchov, speaking of the painful impressions he had received from the scenes in the film he had seen being taken in Hollywood. ‘Showing that sort of film is called freedom in this country. Such “freedom” doesn’t suit us. You seem to like the “freedom” of looking at backsides. But we prefer the freedom to think, to exercise our mental faculties, the freedom of creative progress.’

‘Do you want the showing of such films to be banned by law ?’ Phillips asked.

‘I think there should be such a law’ Khrushchov replied, ‘a moral law.’

‘I am free to see or not to see such films’, Carey said.

‘But your children see things like that !’

‘I have no children.’

‘But other people have. Good children, who live on earth’, Khrushchov remarked. ‘And you and we should protect them from evil influences spread under the guise of “free cultural exchanges”.’

This is realised in other countries besides the Soviet Union. Even in France it was found necessary, beginning from January 1, to tighten up the censorship of films in order to protect young people from the corrupting influences that have grown so strong in recent years.

If it is necessary to protect the rising generation from the influence of immoral shows, how much more important is it to protect them from the corrupting influence of cold war propaganda and the preaching of hate !

There is nothing more immoral and disgusting than the hypocritical contention that we should, for the sake of some abstract, all-inclusive ‘freedom of information’, tolerate the free dissemination of falsehood, slander and subversive propaganda engendering hatred and creating quarrels between nations.

As I said in my letter to the editor of the *Observer*, we are in these matters wholly on the side of the famous American Judge Holmes, who spoke against allowing a provocateur freedom to shout ‘Fire !’ in a crowded theatre. We, too, are against such freedom, and openly say so.

In my letter to the *Observer* I mentioned a conversation with a prominent Englishman who said : ‘Why shouldn’t we incorporate a provision in the Anglo-Soviet cultural agreement to the effect that both sides admit the value of broadcasting material reflecting the public opinion of the broadcasting side ?’ To this I said : ‘That’s fine ! But let us add the words : “. . . and contributing to the consolidation of peace and international understanding and friendship.”’ My interlocutor wilted. ‘No,’ he said, ‘we can’t accept that ; it restricts broadcasting.’ By refusing to accept my suggestion he involuntarily betrayed the real motives of those who stand for ‘unrestricted freedom of broadcasting’.

You will remember that in 1947 the UN General Assembly adopted an extremely valuable and sagacious resolution condemning propaganda, in any form and in any country, that has as its purpose or is capable of creating or strengthening, the threat of war, the breach of the peace, or an act of aggression, and making it binding on all members of UNO to take the necessary steps to disseminate by all available means information and propaganda serving to strengthen friendship between all peoples. Why is that resolution now being rejected ?

Soviet listeners are interested in foreign broadcasts provided they do not contain attacks that are an insult to the dignity of the Soviet people. Nobody

ever protests against our not jamming French radio broadcasts in Russian (they last an hour every day) or Japanese broadcasts in Russian. What is more, we very willingly agree to radio exchanges, and re-broadcast from our stations recorded foreign radio and television programmes, while our partners in exchange broadcast Soviet programmes from their stations. Incidentally, we have such exchanges with the United States, although we are sometimes compelled to jam Voice of America broadcasts when they are of an anti-Soviet nature.

It is only with the BBC that we cannot find a common language. Their directors used to say that they could not agree to exchanges as long as we jammed their broadcasts. But you will remember, jamming was stopped on February 3 last year, and six days later S. V. Kaftanov, chairman of the State Radio and Television Committee, proposed an exchange of programmes to Mr. Greene. And what was the answer ? The BBC directors refused to co-operate even under those conditions. So that we realised that the reference to jamming was only a pretext.

Nevertheless, I again hold out my hand to Mr. Greene and say : ‘ Let us forget the past ; let us, at long last, co-operate. Follow the example of the Voice of America directors, who despite the sharp ideological differences between us are conducting a fruitful exchange of radio and television programmes in which our peoples, who wish to know more of each other, are very much interested.’

NOR are we satisfied with the present exchange of books and periodicals. The Soviet Union buys books and periodicals from Britain to a far greater extent than your country buys from us. We subscribe to 64 newspapers and to more than 2,000 magazines and journals. To this it must be added that the majority of these periodicals are bought for libraries. In this way a far greater number of Soviet people become acquainted with the British press than English readers do with the Soviet press. And I have not yet mentioned that your Board of Trade has prohibited the import of fiction in English, with the exception of the classics.

Replying to my letter to the *Observer*, Maurice Latey, a BBC commentator, has voiced dissatisfaction at my expressing the quantity of imported and exported literature in terms of rubles and numbers of copies. He says that this is something you cannot measure like tons of coal or yards of cloth. That is not the yardstick I am using—I am using the yardstick of honesty. I only ask you to use the same one, and not turn a blind eye to figures that you cannot refute, and against which you have nothing to offer.

Is it not a fact that for many years we have been importing English books, newspapers and other periodicals to the value of almost 2,000,000 rubles, and exporting those items to Britain to a value of less than 400,000 rubles (in last year's Soviet prices) ? Obviously we do not buy these tons of literature (reference to which spoils Mr. Latey's mood) and pay out foreign currency, which we do not have in large quantities, in order to use the paper to wrap up fish. We buy English books, papers and magazines so that Soviet people may read them.

I do not ask you to take my word for it. I have purposely brought with me a dozen or so readers' cards from the Moscow Library of Foreign Literature. You may look at them and see that readers of that library include factory workers, clerks, students and scientists. And there are dozens, and even hundreds, of libraries in the Soviet Union where English books and periodicals are available.

There are literally millions of people in the Soviet Union who know English. In the current school year about 4,000,000 schoolchildren are studying English. And how many people in England are studying Russian ?

Our schoolteachers display as much respect and admiration for Shakespeare, when they tell their pupils about his works, as they do when speaking of our own Tolstoy or Pushkin. In their flights of fancy our children are often carried away on H. G. Wells's time machine, or imagine they are invisible men. They study Newton's laws and Darwin's theory, and when they reach the undergraduate stage they study the economic theories of Ricardo and Adam Smith. How many people in your country read our classics and the works of our scientists ?

Is there not some incongruity in this ? We know a lot about you, while you know hardly anything about us. We speak to you in the language of today, while you are still fettered by old conceptions, obsessions and prejudices. Apparently this is the only explanation—and if it is not it must be due to a desire to turn cultural exchanges into a one-way street—of the demand put forward here in Britain that we should increase our imports of English books, newspapers and magazines still more. Would it not be more to the point to raise the question of increasing British imports of Soviet literature ?

When you are able to inform us that your country is at last importing no less Soviet literature than our country imports of English literature we shall give that news a hearty welcome. We shall not object if you give us the relevant data by weight or in terms of cash.

An equally unsatisfactory situation obtains in the publication of translated literature. You know that the Soviet Union occupies first place in the world for the publication of translated literature. Hundreds of books by English authors are published annually in very large editions. In the post-war period (1946—1960) we published about 2,000 translated books with a total print of something like 100,000,000 copies in 54 languages of the peoples of the USSR. In 1959 we issued 220 books with a total print of 13,356,000 copies, and no fewer were published last year.

Before leaving for London I examined the lists of foreign books that are to be translated into Russian this year. There are 124 books by English authors in these lists. Among them are many books only recently published in England ; for instance, Sir Anthony Eden's memoirs, books by Somerset Maugham, Graham Greene, Aldington, C. P. Snow, Elliot, Priestley and others. In Britain, however, no more than 20 to 30 Russian books, mostly classics, are issued annually in pitifully small editions.

The state of affairs with regard to film exchanges cannot possibly satisfy us. In 1960, Soviet cinema-goers saw eight English films, each of which was shown simultaneously in a large number of cinemas (from 400 to 700) But British cinema fans saw only three Soviet films—*The Fate of a Man*, issued in 40 copies ; *Ivan the Terrible*, issued in two copies ; and the newsreel of Khrushchov's visit to America, of which there was only one copy !

Foreign tourism is rapidly developing in our country. Hundreds of thousands of foreign tourists visit the Soviet Union every year. At the same time, the number of Soviet citizens who tour foreign countries is also rapidly increasing. There has been a noticeable improvement in tourist traffic between the USSR and Britain. In 1960, four times as many Soviet tourists visited Britain as in any previous year. A British newspaper said that in some English towns more Soviet tourists gathered at one time than had formerly visited Britain in the course of a whole year. In 1960, over 8,000 Soviet citizens visited Britain, and about the same number of British citizens visited the USSR.

Unfortunately the British authorities are still retaining elements of the iron curtain in this sphere of cultural contacts.

—*Slightly abridged*

# GOING TO SCHOOL IN UZBEKISTAN

Deana Levin

I HAD long wanted to visit Central Asia, and especially Uzbekistan. The names of Tashkent and, still more, Samarkand attracted me immensely, and I was very happy to have a chance of fulfilling my wish.

First I stayed in Moscow for several months and once again had a thorough look at its schools and other educational institutions. This helped me to assess the educational system in Uzbekistan, noting what was Soviet and what was specifically Uzbek.

I was in the fortunate position of travelling alone. In Moscow I was given an introduction to the chairman of the Uzbek Teachers' Union, and a hotel room was booked for me by the Friendship Society. I bought my air ticket at the Intourist office in Moscow, and went off in a jet one very snowy day in November. What a difference it does make to be able to speak Russian !

Before going to Tashkent I knew very little about Uzbekistan. I had read some facts and figures, and seen photographs of people in national dress, the women with long braids and the men wearing the traditional skull cap—and, of course, I saw many such people during my stay. There are also many, especially the young men and women who wear European dress, except for special occasions.

My first strong impression was that this is *not* Russia, but another Soviet country, a country proud of its history, traditions and ancient culture. I learnt a great deal of this from the very many people I met during my three weeks' stay. They spoke with pride and they knew what they were talking about. This rich past is kept alive, is studied in the schools ; the visible evidence in the shape of monuments in Samarkand and other places serves as centres of visits and excursions ; the old legends and poems are turned into plays and operas ; the old dances are used in modern ballets as well as being kept up in the traditional forms. The great astronomers, mathematicians, philosophers and architects of the Middle Ages are known by the new young generation of Soviet Uzbekistan. And the language of the country, although written in Cyrillic characters, is the one spoken everywhere. Uzbeks speak Russian more or less well. The old people speak it very little, but the younger ones speak it with varying degrees of accuracy. The proof that Uzbek is the language spoken in the home is that small children not yet at school do not speak Russian at all. This was the only section of the community with which I was unable to communicate direct !

Uzbekistan is a rich land, and when the irrigation schemes are completed it will be very rich. Not only are the natural resources being developed, but industry is too. The huge cotton-picking machines that I saw on the collective farms are manufactured in Tashkent. Food is plentiful—the national dishes of rice and meat, the many fruits and vegetables, are all produced in the country, and the markets and vegetable stalls are most colourful.

There is a great deal of building going on in Tashkent and Samarkand, which I saw with my own eyes, and I am sure that the same can be seen in other parts of the country too. One section of Tashkent is very like the new sectors in Moscow. Instead of the traditional one-storey houses, here blocks of flats of four floors are going up, but each flat has a deep covered balcony, in keeping with the need for cool and shade in the hot summers. When an old section of the city is due for demolition the residents are given the option of a piece of land on which to build a single-storey house with a courtyard, or of a flat in a new block. It interested me to find that the really young couples choose the flats, while the older ones opt for the piece of land.



Uzbekistan is foremost in the Soviet Union for having almost done away with the two-shift system in schools. Tashkent is the only place remaining with some schools still in two shifts. The schools here have plenty of playground space, and additional buildings are going up on the sites.

The general pattern of education in Uzbekistan is, of course, similar to that in any part of the Soviet Union. The school is a Soviet one, and the main curriculum is the same everywhere. However, as in all the republics, instruction in the vast majority of schools is in the native language, and Russian is begun in the second class (aged eight years). This is counted as a 'voluntary' subject in that, although it is on the time-table, failure in it at the end of any year does not prevent the pupils from going into the next class.

In Uzbekistan two-thirds of the schools are Uzbek; that is, the medium of instruction is the Uzbek language. The remaining are Russian, Kazak, Tadjik, Karakalpak and Khirgiz. There are many people from neighbouring republics living in Uzbekistan, and they have a right to have schools in their own language for their children. The syllabuses for these schools are received from the appropriate republican ministries of education, and Uzbek syllabuses are sent to the neighbouring republics where there are groups of Uzbek children. Russian and other language schools teach Uzbek from the third class (nine years of age).

The foreign languages taught in the schools of Uzbekistan include Persian, Turkish, Urdu, Chinese, Hindi and Arabic, as well as European languages. A number of schools I visited were going over from a European to an Asian language. This seemed to me reasonable, as there are many Asian visitors from abroad, and the air links from Tashkent spread over the whole of the Orient. I met a number of graduates of the Institute of Foreign Languages in Tashkent who spoke good French or English, and European languages are not being neglected.

Where there are schools of varying nationalities, parents have the right of choice. I met a number of Uzbek families who chose to send their children to Russian schools, and they gave two reasons—one, that their children would in this way become bilingual, as they spoke Uzbek at home and studied it as a second language at school; the other that if they later wished to and were able to study in a university in Moscow or somewhere else in Russia there would be no language difficulty to overcome. The chairman of the Samarkand Teachers' Union sends his children to a Tadjik school for the first four years of their school life, and then transfers them to an Uzbek school. A number of them have continued their education at higher institutes of learning in the Russian language, though others are studying in Uzbek at the Institutes.

At the Pedagogical Institute in Tashkent there are 24 nationalities among the students and the courses are given in Uzbek, Russian and Kazak. Kazakstan borders on Uzbekistan, and there are two departments run in this language. Out of the 400 teachers at the Institute (there are 3,250 students in the day courses and 9,000 in the correspondence courses) there are 52 Uzbek women and 160 Uzbek men, who lecture, of course, in their own tongue.

In my short visit to Samarkand I was able to visit only one school, which was an Uzbek school. There were several older teachers who spoke Russian rather poorly, and for some of my questions it was necessary to enlist the help of the head of the school, who spoke it quite well. In another Uzbek school which I visited in Tashkent I had the same experience, and it is interesting to note that there were only Uzbek children here, as it is a district of the city where there is a 100 per cent. Uzbek population. Parts of it are due for demolition, but many parents have chosen to have plots of land in the same district and to build their own houses.

School No. 145 in Tashkent is run in the Russian language, but the head of the school is Uzbek. He told me that he has 19 nationalities in his school,

including a number of Russian children. In boarding school No. 2, belonging to the collective farm 'Kzil Uzbekistan', there are five Russian and eight Uzbek classes, and there are Uzbeks and other nationalities in both sections. Another boarding school I visited in Tashkent was run on similar lines. In all these schools the non-teaching staff seemed to speak in Uzbek to each other and to the children, and in the boarding schools the children spoke either language after lessons, Uzbek among themselves and whatever language the leader spoke in the circles and pioneer activities.

I wandered all over Tashkent on my own every afternoon, and there was no doubt that the people, with very few exceptions, were talking Uzbek or other non-Russian languages among themselves, on the buses and trams, in the shops and on the streets. But when I asked the way, or bought something in a shop, I always found that I was understood and answered in Russian. And just as surely as I know that I am in France or any other country by the different atmosphere from England, I also felt and knew, by the atmosphere, by the language, by the looks of the people, by the fostering of their national arts, crafts, writing of poetry and music, by the number of newspapers printed in Uzbek, that I was in Uzbekistan, a country in its own right.

But there was also no doubt whatsoever that I was also in a country of the Soviet Union, a Soviet republic fulfilling its part in the seven-year plan, making tremendous strides forward as a result of the freeing of the peasants and artisans from the feudal system they lived under before the revolution, and the freeing of the women from the life behind the veil and all that it implied.

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# Surveys and Reviews

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## THE YOUNG MAN OF THE MID-20th CENTURY

What is the image of the young man of the middle of the 20th century ? What kind of hero of our times is presented in literature and art ? Last autumn the Soviet Journal Foreign Literature held a three-day discussion on this theme and in its November issue published extracts from the contributions.

What gave rise to the 'beatniks' in the USA ? What are the British 'angries' getting at ? Are there 'angries' in Japan ? What is the hero of the literature of Black Africa like ? These were some of the questions discussed. In reproducing part of the discussion here we have had, for reasons of space, to confine ourselves in the main to the contributions on English and American writing.

**W**HAT sort of person is our contemporary, the mid-20th-century young man ? What does literature—the voice and conscience of peoples, the mentor of youth—have to say about him ?

**P. TOPER :** When we speak of the 'young man of the mid-20th century' we recognize, to begin with, that no such single, typical, 'average' individual exists either in life or in literature. We are here confronted not only with diverse external manifestations of youth, but with an underlying problem: the fathers-and-sons theme is not only an eternal one in art, but an eternally new one.

In the exposition 'The Human Race' which I saw at the American Exhibition in Moscow, I was struck by a number of photographs in the section devoted to youth's initiation into life : the naïve, candid faces of young girls bathed in the rays of the sun, faces radiating purity and trust ; and alongside them words from the diary of Anne Frank—of faith in goodness despite everything. In contrast, near these captions were photographs of young people from various countries—Germans, Frenchmen, Americans—in whose young, insolent faces were already clearly visible the lineaments of future ravishers, murderers and sadists. Wonderful photographs which I shall not easily forget ; but I should like to dispute most forcibly the author's view regarding the supposed clash between the 'male' and 'female' elements in life.

No, it is not the eternal contradictions eternally facing mankind—destruction and creation, good and evil, violence and forgiveness—that move the world.

A generation, just like the concepts 'good' and 'evil,' is not a biological but a socio-historical concept. If we define the present younger generation as those people between 20 and 30 years today we still say nothing, or very little. It would be much more exact to define it as comprising those who passed their childhood in World War II, the most cruel and bloody in man's history, and their youth in the years of victory over fascism and the formation of the socialist camp ; those who entered adult life when the Damocles sword of a third world war, a nuclear war, hangs over mankind, and when the world-wide protest against war and imperialism is acquiring gigantic, unprecedented,

liberating force. These are the conditions under which the young man of the mid-20th century lives. This is where he must seek out the 'evil' he must overcome and the 'good' for which he must struggle.

As historic epochs recede into the past they take on smoother and clearer outlines. Our descendants, however, may form the same judgment of our age as we do, considering it a period of great tragic conflict, while at the same time a period of unprecedented progress.

The greatness and complexity of our era is apparent everywhere, in every corner of the globe, however far it may be from the mainstreams of history, and in the most secret recesses of the human soul, however removed they may be from the world of social relations. But in each country, in each social group their manifestations are different. From the character of the young man, to employ Gorky's expression, from the way youth feels and reacts, we can define the peculiarities of both the life and literature of any country and any epoch.

In Nurdal Grieg's book *The World Can Still Be Young*, one of his characters, an Englishman, says that as soon as a man reaches 30 he begins to see the world in a comic, if somewhat discomfiting, light : before his very eyes he can see his schoolfellows and former playmates grow up and assume roles of responsibility in the world, yet he knows that they are all good-for-nothings. This is a most characteristic thought for the literature of a country in which 'to grow up' means nothing more than to settle down to a steady bourgeois round of existence. But such a thought is utterly impossible, for example, in the literature depicting the fervent, battling life of the countries that are building socialism, or in the literature of the modern East, where the young people are entering on life just when their countries are for the first time actively entering into history.

## THE ROAD TO TRUTH

Revolutions have always awakened into life vast numbers of young people of talent. Saint Juste was 27 when he died, Robespierre 36. Talking of his meeting with Raoul Castro, the 26-year-old War Minister of the revolutionary armed forces of Cuba, Boris Polevoy, recalled the names of Lazo, Shchors and other commanders of the civil war who were even younger. The Soviet generation of the '20s—that of our fathers and grandfathers—knew countless young men of talent in all departments of life. Arkady Gaidar was 17 when he commanded a regiment with a special assignment ; and there is a story that Mikhail Frunze said to him : 'Remember, my lad, such things are possible only in revolutions.'

There is a very sharp dividing line between the social life of young people in the present-day bourgeois West and in countries engaged in building socialism or countries where oppressed peoples are acquiring national and social freedom. Here too there is a conflict between fathers and sons, for without conflict there can be no movement forward ; but the character of the conflict is different—the clear, free perspective of development, the tremendously expanding horizons of life permit the young, while continuing the traditions of their elders, to carry onward the banner of their struggle. From the literature of these countries we clearly see that there no paths are barred to youth.

It is no accident that the persistent framing of the question of the fate of a *generation* is peculiar precisely to writers of the bourgeois West, where the young, looking at those in commanding positions, have in fact the right to 'look with the bitter mockery of deceived sons at their dissipated fathers.' It is precisely here that they talk of a 'beat generation,' 'a generation without fathers,' 'a voiceless generation,' 'a faceless generation,' and so on. This terminology has long become a cliché, and now the fashionable and just as

ill-defined term 'the lost generation' has been coined—by which is meant not a whole generation, but only a certain part of the intelligentsia, seeking its place amid the social upheavals of our time. For the heroes of these books, the question of what they ought to do with their lives is not an easy but an agonising one.

We live in times of a remarkably rapid growth of social activity in all spheres of life ; literally every day brings news of more new actions by masses of the people, above all by the young, in defence of their rights and freedoms, in defence of peace. Literally before our very eyes ever more new peoples enter the arena of history. This process, which is embracing the whole of mankind, does not of course proceed all the time in a straight line. In some countries, in some social strata, it is replaced by a striving to withdraw from public life, a desire evoked by dread of the complexities of our era. This is nowhere more apparent than in the literature about youth, for whom the question of social activity is well-nigh the first one in living practice.

It is not surprising that the characters of contemporary novels and their prototypes in real life do not everywhere and always easily find themselves someone to imitate, some example to follow. Too many forget the experiences of their own fathers, who learned the great truth of this, our century, in the battles and doubts of the '20s and '30s, the truth which the October revolution enshrined and revealed to all mankind. More and more new 'sons,' however, are being led to an awareness of this great truth, even though their paths be neither smooth nor straight.

The hero who is constantly thinking, seeking, struggling and creating—he is the *true young man* of our era, the hero of every genuinely humanistic literature, irrespective of country or writer. He refuses to reconcile himself to the world's imperfections ; he believes in his ability to influence the course of events ; he loves passionately, he hates passionately—he acts.

**D. URNOV :** The conditions of a young mind suddenly galvanized by resolve but straightaway poisoned by doubt, the state of inner tension when a thousand influences pull in different directions and none with sufficient force to triumph, the tendency to compulsive self-analysis—these were all familiar to the Danish prince Hamlet. It was what made him appear dangerous. For this he was shipped off to England—since when there have appeared in England writers who begin their careers with the 'angry protest' for which King Claudius rebuked his nephew. Possibly the Danish prince infected the British with his own peculiar malady.

## THE PRINCE OF DENMARK AND THE ROAD OF 'THE ANGRIES'

The English are reluctant to recall so long-standing a tradition of 'resentfulness' in their literature. Sometimes it seems to them that the 18th century, with its mature rational outlook, interrupted this tradition. Byron and his heroes asserted that it was still alive. In the 20th century every decade has witnessed the birth in English literature of a new generation of 'resentful,' 'lost' and 'angry' young men, who have demanded an answer from life and tried to effect a reappraisal of outworn concepts. With the onset of maturity they have gone their various ways. Some, like Huxley, turned to intellectual equilibration and reactionary Utopianism ; others, like Evelyn Waugh, became thorough-going Catholics ; and the representatives of the 'lost generation'—Richard Aldington in particular—experienced a profound creative crisis. Auden, Spender and C. Day Lewis broke with the broad democratic



front. Fox, Caudwell and Cornford died in Spain fighting in the ranks of the International Brigade.

There are both general and particular reasons why the development of a literature of protest among England's younger writers has been uneven and contradictory. What is important to note is the comparative continuity of growth of a literature of 'angry protest' in the 20th century and its expression, today, in the writings of the 'angry young men.'

**S. VYELIKOVSKY :** In France there has been noticeable, I think, not so much a growth as a disintegration of this revolt against authority. It is no accident that France has had no 'angries'; on the contrary, there has been a surfeit of failures, of youths broken in spirit, and indifferent.

## THE RETURN OF THE 'FAILURES'

As not infrequently happens, traits of hereditary similarity, scarcely distinguishable because so commonly seen, underlie the different facial expressions of the representatives of two generations, the dissimilarity in their manners, spiritual temper, mental habits and social experiences. The revolt of the young intellectuals of the '20s was energetic, distinct and unconditional; although completely powerless in their positive strivings, they at least knew what they hated. Today this revolt bears within it the seed of renunciation, of withdrawal from any active revolt; in their very rejection of the *status quo* can be detected a lack of assurance in their own competence to reject. Why is this?

The reasons, in my opinion, are various, occasionally even mutually exclusive. On the one hand, for the young people of the '50s the past is not only the Nazi plague of hatred of mankind, but also the heroic epic of the Resistance, which even the most inveterate sceptics are obliged to take into account. On the other hand, the victorious expansion of the new socialist world, embracing almost half of the globe; inspires alarm in the heir of the bourgeois family: ready for anarchistic revolt against the age-old imperfections of existence, he is still far from ready to renounce the material blessings which his dad's imposing fortune promises him. It is enough to recall the vagaries of the reprobate Phillippe Latourneau in Roger Vaillant's *Pierrette Aimable*, his obsequious admiration for the strength and spiritual beauty of the working-class girl delegate, and his powerlessness to break with the parasitic traditions of his own rapacious relatives, to picture how much the present-day 'prodigal son' has degenerated.

Already in existentialism, which may be considered the leading movement of bourgeois literature in the '40s, these continuous vacillations became apparent between attempts to oppose the chaos of an inhuman environment and a palsied desire to hide oneself away in a burrow, renouncing all courage. The existentialist novel was not divorced from its epoch—that of the anti-fascist struggle—and it is precisely here that we find the sources of that tragic stoicism, not without greatness, which marked the behaviour of Dr. Rieux in Camus's *The Plague*, as well as of that self-sacrificing, nigh-heroic Mathieu Delarue in Sartre's *Paths of Freedom*, who tried to halt a column of Germans invading France. However, even in moments of enlightenment the existentialists remained fettered by their view of the world as a mass of stupidities; and the logical result of the searchings of their characters was the conviction that all was vanity—the desolation of exiles feeling themselves lost in the boundless element of evil (Sartre—*Nausea*; Camus—*The Fall*). It was precisely the horror and confusion felt in life, directly inherited from the existentialists, which dominated the bourgeois literature of the next decade, led by its fashionable

prophets, the *avant-gardistes* Beckett and Ionesco, both dedicated to the empty thesis that man is nothing, and is capable of nothing, in this world.

Never before has the 'prodigal son' been so burdened with the sense of his own inadequacy ; never has he been so helpless and spiritually barren ; never has he so often sought refuge again under the parental wing.

### THERE ARE MORE IMPORTANT CAUSES !

Of course, there is tragedy in this, too. But there is tragedy and tragedy. The youth of France have more important causes than revolts in a whisky glass. Before them are serious aims and a difficult road ; to follow it much is needed —inflexibility of purpose, clear unhampered thinking, moral purity and civic courage, all of which and a lot more besides has slipped the grasp of the bankrupt rebels. Their task is to reshape the world according to the laws of happiness and charity. About this path of struggle and hope, on which the best of the young sons of this great people have already embarked, not a few books have already been written, and still more fine poems will be composed.

**D. URNOV :** To what extent young people are mistaken in their pretensions is a separate question. But whatever the fate of a protesting generation, its protest is fundamentally and essentially justified and historically conditioned. Whether outstanding or ordinary men participate in this movement, however much is permitted them and however much they themselves are able to achieve, the open manifestation of tension and sensitivity of youth has the effect of raising the general tone and drawing general attention to ripening problems.

### ' WE DON'T GET ON WITH ANYTHING ! '

The 'angry young men' in England are a good example of this. A certain section of English youth, expecting fulfilment of glowing promises from the post-war Labour Government, received instead unemployment, American bases and the Suez adventure, and got angry. 'Some day I shall write a book about the lot of us,' threatened Jimmy Porter, the hero of Osborne's play *Look Back in Anger* ; 'it will burn with fire and blood, my blood.' These young people are full of contempt for the pharisaism of the philistines, attack with hatred the successful politicians, shun the snobbishness of the intellectuals. They seek the well-spring of civic virtue. They await a powerful voice, calling them to come to themselves. But as for the 'angries' themselves, touch them and they burst into a fit of impotent rage.

'We don't get on with anything. We don't ever succeed in anything. We're a nuisance, we do nothing but make a God almighty fuss about anything we ever do. All the time we're trying to draw someone's attention to our nasty, sordid, unlikely little problems', says Archie Rice, hero of another of Osborne's plays, *The Entertainer*.

Making an incredible noise and annoyed by their surroundings, they stubbornly insist, 'Well, why, why, why, why ?' What are they driving at ?

They would like to know who is to blame for shattering their national heritage, for the moral degeneration and cynicism. They would like to exact revenge for their betrayed hopes ; they would like to believe in the staunchness of their own principles.

### EACH REVOLTS BY HIMSELF

This was a protest not of class, nor of party, but of a generation. Compared with the '20s and '30s, wider democratic strata were affected this time : not a select intellectual elite, the 'university brains,' but offspring of the 'middle class'—at best, graduates of provincial universities, who, on completing their courses, were compelled to hire themselves out as unskilled workers, door-to-

door salesmen, small-time shop assistants, and so on. They suffered the first shock to their illusions : they were brought face to face with the inexorable practical problem of finding an appropriate place in society. It was then that they might have felt their social affinity and come forward with united strength. Affinity they did feel, however, and even lent support to one another, but they denied any actual socio-political link with one another.

The 'angries' suffered, as it were, from the fact that they had inherited no 'noble aims,' that everything had become too shallow. At the same time they themselves lacked the creative impulse to set themselves one single important task. Their social protest was quickly limited to a concern for their own place in society. No sooner had 'a room at the top' become an attainable reality than their hurrying on down was braked.

## WHERE IS THE TRUTH ?

'A study of the malady of our time,' 'a play of our generation'—in these exaggeratedly loud advertising claims for the works of the 'angries' there were also true notes, however. In fact, despite their inner isolation, their spiritual immaturity, their inexperience of life, their professional blunders, the 'angries' expressed the vital moods of the post-war generation of young Englishmen. Pursuing a sensitive intuition, they managed to discover, if not a method of analysis, then the words capable of conveying their state of crisis, and which, aided by socio-political changes, gripped the minds of the young. But the trouble with them was that they never went beyond intuitive criticism. Having expressed a yearning for personal freedom, hatred of despotism, human impulse, opposition to the official press, the young 'angries' threw out the challenge 'I feel the truth,' but were then at a loss to answer the weighty observation of stern maturity : 'How can you know the truth ? Vague awareness of untruth is still far from possession of the truth.'

**D. ZHUKOV :** Of course, a heightened sense of justice has always been inherent in youth, a tendency to rebelliousness, and hostility towards 'staid' common sense. But it seems to me that Urnov has not stressed another side of this revolt sufficiently. Its meaning can be understood only if we sort out where, when, in what conditions and against what youth is revolting, i.e. if we approach the question in a concrete and historical way. It must be remembered that the contemporary bourgeoisie strives to confine the rebelliousness of its youth within the bounds of the capitalist way of life, corrupting young people with material benefits, severely punishing the renegades. Adapting themselves to the existing capitalist order of things, many young people bottle up their dissatisfaction inside themselves ; scrambling up the ladder of success, they preserve their understanding of the deficiencies of bourgeois society, while at the same time, hour by hour, they abandon their convictions. This turns them into cynics, convinced of the imperfections of the commercial world about them and of the impossibility of making any change. Thus was born the generation of 'silent ones,' as the bourgeois critics term them, a generation of conformists.

## THE 'BEAT GENERATION'

The books of the writers of the 'beat generation' which emerged in the USA represent a revolt against conformism ; and the character of this revolt testifies to the depth of the spiritual crisis afflicting contemporary bourgeois society, which no longer can put forward ideas capable of enthusing the youth.

For all that, progressive criticism in America treats this movement of the 'beatniks' with complete seriousness, trying to fathom the moods of these young people. And this is understandable ; the 'beatniks', revolting against the tyranny of things and against the ugliness of bourgeois civilisation, deserve

attention. Mike Gold, for example, in an article describing the participation of the 'beatniks' in a San Francisco demonstration against nuclear tests, wrote that one must try to understand the problems facing youth and discover their way of thinking. The youth are 'rebels without aims', the sole law of their being having become a mistrust of everything. 'Learn to talk to youth. And above all, listen to them.'

The young poet Ginsberg, for example, has written a talented poem, *The Wail*, which has been heard throughout America and has the impact of an exploding bomb. It is very pessimistic. It speaks of life in America as of some nightmare. Ginsberg is preoccupied with self-torture, he shows us people sinking to the very bottom—not people, but disembodied bundles of nerves, numbed and torpid, wander over America feeling nothing but pain. The poet sees no way out for himself, neither in the present nor in the future, except to throw himself off the roof. Bourgeois civilisation he conceives in the guise of a Moloch, in the aspect of some all-devouring monster.

Another poet, Ferlinghetti, has written several poems against the horror of atomic war. Gregory Corso dedicated his poem to unmasking the hypocrisy of bourgeois morality.

The American writer Norman Mailer, describing the large scope of the 'beatnik movement', asserted that the moods of the 'beat generation' are peculiar to millions of Americans although they themselves are unaware of it.

Jack Kerouac has written several books dealing with the life and views of the 'beatniks.' In two of them—*On the Road* and *Dharma Burns*—the vagabonds' way of life is presented. The theme of vagabondage is not new in American literature. Remember Jack London, O. Henry and other great writers. This theme later degenerated, and became fashionable. Sympathy for declassed elements, for drunkards and idlers, is the favourite hobby-horse of many prominent American writers and dramatists of the present time. Philosophising tramps are the favourites with O'Neil and others. In this respect, Kerouac's books may perhaps be considered traditional.

## REBELS WITHOUT A CAUSE

Kerouac's novels are without plot and have no characters. They are the excited monologues of a raconteur, and stuffed with every possible confession and protest, pictures of nature, recollections, impressions of meetings with people, and thoughts about them. In his exposition there is no disciplined choice. Following the theory of the 'spontaneity of writing,' Kerouac notes down everything that comes into his head and never strikes out even those pages whose proper place, by the common opinion of critics, is the wastepaper basket.

Naturally, as soon as a writer's genuine inspiration is lost a novel literally falls apart. The work becomes a disjointed and chaotic mass of detail evoking only tedium and confusion. A disintegration of form ensues, as happened with Kerouac's last two novels, *Dr. Saxe* and *Maggy Cassidy*, in which he turned to the recollections of his youth. The range of questions engaging Kerouac proved to be quite narrow. The theme of the 'beat generation,' to which he returned again and again, exhausted itself. The figures in his novels became more and more shadowy, the argumentations diffuse, the stylistic quests abortive. His superficial knowledge of the life of other sections of the American population has not afforded material for new books.

**G. ZLOBIN :** Are there many 'beatniks' in the USA ? Idle minds have calculated that they amount to about 100,000. Thus they comprise an insignificant part of America's youth, although they make a great deal of noise.

Besides, we must consider the diversity of their social *milieus*. But who are the rest, then? Incomparably more 'silent ones', conformists, contemporary Babbitts, those whom some American authors term the 'backbone of the nation.'

What is more important, however, is to note that the forces challenging them are greater.

## LIFE CALLS TO ACTION

**R. ORLOVA :** We all know what happened on the streets of Tokio and how strikingly the youth demonstrated their worth in those events. We all know the role played by youth in the overthrow of the Syngman Rhee régime in Korea, and what happened in Turkey and Algeria. This is the reality of today : literature inevitably lags behind.

In the south of the USA events are daily occurring that America has not witnessed for 100 years, not since the emancipation. Much the same can be said of the Aldermaston marches in England—marches against the H-bomb. The English themselves say that there is not a single writer, let alone a young writer, who has not personally participated in these events or given his support. These facts bear witness to the tremendous developments taking place in the very life of bourgeois society, to the breaking with old ideas—and all in the most direct way affect youth.

Literature will probably tell us tomorrow of the sit-down demonstrations in the American south. But we can already read something today of the psychological make-up of the boys and girls who took part in this new form of mass protest against discrimination in the writings of those Americans who attentively study the physiognomy of modern youth. The hero of Lorraine Hansberry's play *A Raisin in the Sun*, Walter Lee Younger, has some of the characteristics of both 'beatniks' and 'angries'—he believes in next to nothing, he strives only to snatch his private chunk of happiness; in his rejoinders one detects both scepticism and cynicism. The conduct of his sister is vague and inscrutable, though at the decisive moment they both prove worthy children of the noble old negress Lena. The 'fathers and sons' problem is raised and decided in this play as follows : the children have something to learn from mothers like Lena Younger. Most remarkable is the interest the author shows in the multifarious and, at times, quite complex paths young people take in order to become fighters at the decisive turning points of their lives and perform deeds of daring, genuinely social deeds.

Escaping from the chain gang, the negro Galen and the white man Jackson did not bow their heads ; in a most complicated situation they remained people (scenario by Nedric Young and Douglas Smith—*The Defiant One*).

The path of the young negro Galen was not easy. The cruel laws of the alien world outside, the bestial school of race discrimination, try to kill and stifle everything truly human in him. Galen opposes the circumstances that envelop him ; it is he who teaches the laws of humanity to the white man chained to his side, and he who emerges triumphant from the grim struggle. Reading about Galen, thinking about him, you feel the fighting motto of the struggling American negroes : full equality of rights in this generation.

Somewhat earlier there appeared *Youngblood*, a talented and lucid novel by John O. Killens. His characters are not drawn from a youth beaten down, broken and betrayed, but from a youth that is ready to fight. In the young generation of America ripen grapes of wrath, and even today we can see the features of these truly angry, rightly angered young people, people who firmly know what they are fighting against. We see them in life and in literature, and we shall see them still more fully tomorrow.



## MAYAKOVSKY'S "BEDBUG"

**The Bedbug and Selected Poetry.** Vladimir Mayakovsky. Trs. Max Hayward and George Reavey; edited by Patricia Blake. (Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 317pp. 21/-.)

THERE is still not much material on Mayakovsky in English, and the present volume of translations is therefore very welcome, especially since Herbert Marshall's *Mayakovsky and his Poetry* is so hard to obtain.

Max Hayward contributes a lively and fluent version of the satiric-fantastic play *The Bedbug*, and has also translated the important poem 'Conversation with a Tax Collector about Poetry.' George Reavey deals with a well-varied selection of the poems, including 'The Cloud in Trousers,' 'An Extraordinary Adventure,' 'I Love,' 'Back Home!', and 'At the Top of my Voice'. The book was originally published in America, and still has American spelling. It is a pity that no mention is made of the London University Dramatic Society's production of *The Bedbug* (1959), which was widely reviewed.

The translations of the poems sit more closely to the content than Herbert Marshall's, but less closely to the style. No attempt has been made to reproduce the rhymes, or even the rhythms, of the originals. This may find some defence in the fact that there is a facing Russian text, but a good deal is lost. The present volume does more than justice to Mayakovsky as a *fauve*, a tortured lyricist, an alienated futurist to whom feeling and talent were all; it still does not show the poet as a craftsman, the poet who studied Holbein and who in spite of the famous yellow blouse and the 'slap at public taste' was also using the years from 1910 to 1914 as a 'period of work on form, of mastering the poetic word.'

Patricia Blake in her introduction accepts the view that Mayakovsky's output can be divided into the 'lyrical' and the 'political', and that almost all the work which is really 'literature' belongs to the first category (the exceptions being some of the early pieces about the revolution). This is surely a narrow conception of literature. Miss Blake has her gaze so intently fixed on the poet's 'personal tragedy' that she cannot appreciate how important to Mayakovsky himself was his desire to serve and exhort the new society of 1917.

Who is to say whether he 'wasted his talent', as she claims, designing posters and writing slogans and cajolements? Milton too has been blamed for diverting his energies into the writing of pamphlets and propaganda for the new society of the Commonwealth.

But what a man believes he must do. And often the engagement in these 'non-poetic' activities deepens a man's serious poetry when he comes to write it. 'At the Top of my Voice' certainly shows us what his 'civic' commitments cost Mayakovsky in personal suffering and adjustment: but at the same time we must measure the cost against the depth, sincerity and victory of the poem.

Although one may argue with Miss Blake over her view of the poet's function, and perhaps also over her interpretation of *The Bedbug* as primarily a work of disillusioned idealism, this is an enterprising book which should prove very useful in introducing Mayakovsky to a wider public.

EDWIN MORGAN.

## TREASURES IN COLOUR

**The Kremlin Art Treasures.** David Douglas Duncan. (Studio Books, 160pp., 83 coloured plates. £7/10/-.)

THE publishers, Studio Books of Fleet Street, London, claim that this book, *The Kremlin Art Treasures*, with its 83 superb four-colour plates based on photographs by David Douglas Duncan, 'contains the first coverage in colour photography ever made of the Kremlin art treasures.'

This is, however, somewhat of an exaggeration, seeing that even such a popular Russian weekly as the Moscow *Ogonyok* has on a great many occasions published in the form of easily detachable supplements quite creditable multi-coloured reproductions of the Kremlin churches, palaces and art treasures. There are also a number of specialised publications in Russia and abroad dealing with these subjects with the help of colour photography, the Czechs, for instance, having achieved a remarkably high standard in this respect. This should not, however, detract from the skill with which Mr. Duncan's photographs, taken with a Leica on Kodachrome, were turned by a Swiss firm in Basel into first-rate colour engravings last year. In fact, the whole book has been beautifully printed in Switzerland.

Mr. Duncan himself is neither an historian nor an art historian. He was, we are told, working in the USA military intelligence, 'a Marine combat photo-officer' who became known to the general public by his photographic work for the USA magazine *Life*. The angle of his interest in art is reflected in the very title of his only other book with art interest, *The Private World of Pablo Picasso*, published in 1958.

The text of the book *The Kremlin Art Treasures* was written by Mr. Duncan, and we are informed that 'it traces directly [Russia's exciting] history from the eleventh century to modern times [1958], and each spread is self-contained in that the story is highlighted by a picture of the icon or crown or Bible-cover or throne that was most typical [or beautiful] of that moment.' Hence in contrast to the recent (1958) Moscow album *The Kremlin of Moscow* it is icons and *objets d'art* rather than architecture that the American author has chosen to illustrate his potted history. In fact, the Kremlin church building is reduced in his narrative, in disregard of the dominant Russian and Byzantine note, to the cathedrals of the Assumption, Annunciation and Archangel Michael, all built within 25 years between 1480 and 1505, the first by Fioravanti, the second by other 'Fioravanti-influenced architects' and the third by Alevisio.

The journalistic point of view can be seen, for example, in the excellent reproduction of Empress Catherine's wedding gown, which is meant to highlight the chapter on that monarch. Page 28 of the album is printed with solely the following words arranged to look like verse: 'No Babylonian king . . . or shah-en-shah. No pharaoh, sultan or caliph. No maharaja, Aztec emperor, Medici or Inca chief. No one before the medieval tsar ever amassed such treasure during his life; and yet, despite it all, each was chained at night to his sleepless fear of the assassin's tread that he would fail to hear.' The illustration on the opposite page (29) shows the tsar's bedroom in the Terem Palace, with the light striking through the mica-paned windows on the magenta cover of the four-poster.

Among the many gifts from abroad to Russian tsars exhibited in the Kremlin Chamber of Arms are English silver and a carriage sent by Queen Elizabeth to the tsar Boris Godunov. These naturally arouse great interest in English visitors, but, unfortunately, are not included in the volume.

This review can be best concluded by my repeating the remark I overheard not long ago in the crowd thronging the Chamber of Arms, one young Muscovite observing to another: 'Thank heaven for the Tsars: without them we would be unable to see all these treasures on this frosty Sunday morning.'

I reflected on this jocular appreciation of the Kremlin treasures from the past when at the end of the volume I saw a magnificent plate showing a four-columned November anniversary procession marching under the Kremlin walls with a large banner across the entrance to the Red Square bearing in gigantic letters the imprint on it: 'GLORY TO THE PEOPLE, TO THE CREATORS.' As if the author were emphasising the wedding of the old with the new.

STANISLAV OSIAKOVSKI.

## VANISHED CHILDHOOD

A *Russian Childhood*. E. N. Vodovosova. Trs. Anthony Brode and Olga Lane. (Faber and Faber. 216pp. 18/-)

RUSSIA 100 years ago, Russian feudal life with its contradictions, injustices, warm-heartedness and cruelty, its depth of ignorance and its thirst for knowledge, its abject submission and incipient rebellion; the passing shades of Gogol and Dostoevsky and Turgenev; the unbridgeable gulf between the serf and his 'owner' no greater than that between the so-called provincial 'nobility' and the wealthy sophisticated members of the imperial court.

The story in itself is too slight. It leaves the reader unsatisfied, wanting to know more; yet in its brief outline it touches on a number of aspects of a way of living as far removed from our present day as that of Justice Shallow and Falstaff.

The book is written as an autobiography, the first 15 years of a little girl starting with her recollection of a cholera epidemic in 1848 which kills off her father and other members of the family. The direct consequence is that the mother retires with the remaining children to live in the country, where she becomes engrossed in managing the estate and leaves the little girls to the devoted care of the old nanny. One would have liked to hear more about that aspect—how the mother proceeded to make the estate pay, what the organisation was, how many serfs, and what they did. But quite obviously a small girl would not be interested in such matters.

Something of the serf's existence emerges in the story of the music-loving Vaska, in the tale of ill-treatment meted out by the manager of a neighbouring estate, in the description of the harrowing scenes of conscription. Also there is the familiar figure of Russian literature, the old nurse, the greatest influence during the formative years of the children and the Russian prototype of the American 'mammy' or the privileged 'old retainer' of England.

There are some delightful thumbnail sketches of the provincial 'nobility', some living in mere hovels, without money, yet clinging to the spurious values of their caste. This glimpse of pretentious snobbery and eccentricity reminds one of characters in *Dead Souls*. An interesting sidelight is the question of education. Despite all obstacles, despite the underlying belief that knowledge is 'unladylike', one of the sisters manages to achieve her aim to 'learn', while another is married off to a 'madman' in order to acquire an unpaid tutor for the family—macabre touch of Dostoevsky!

The latter half of the book concerns the school years when the little girl enters the select and formidable Smolny Institute with its strict supervisors themselves in terror of the implacable traditions, its complete lack of true teaching. The whole atmosphere of

snobbery and narrow-mindedness is vividly portrayed, as well as the attempt at reform and education so complacently and successfully stifled.

The one great drawback of the book, to my mind, is the lack of explanation—nothing to tell you either of the source of the story or even of the language from which it was so excellently translated. Is it purely a work of fiction? If so, some bibliography would be of interest to learn where the author found the descriptions of life within the Smolny Institute 100 years ago. Is it based on some diary? If so, whose and how discovered? Is the story taken from reminiscences heard in childhood? Once again one would like to know more about it. Although written in the first person it surely cannot be an account of the childhood of a woman now 115 years old.

Apart from these slight inadequacies, *A Russian Childhood* is a delightful book portraying a way of life which was by no means so very different from that in the years before the revolution. The peasants, although technically freed in 1861, were still illiterate, overworked, impoverished. It is interesting to compare this picture with the writings of Gorky depicting a period some 40 to 50 years later and to see how very little the pattern had changed in that time. This only serves to emphasise the fantastic leap forward achieved in the last 40 years

SOFGA SKIPWITH.

## THROUGH AMERICAN EDUCATIONISTS' EYES

*The Changing Soviet School.* G. Z. F. Bereday, W. W. Brickman, G. H. Read. (Constable. 514pp. Illustrated. 36/-.)

THIS large volume comprises the work of 70 American educationists who represented the Comparative Education Society in a field study in the USSR in 1958. It is edited by the three gentlemen named above from material gathered by all the members of the group, who divided up the field of study between them, and visited institutions and lessons according to their own special qualifications. For example, the geography specialists sat in at geography lessons, the mathematicians attended mathematics lessons, and so on.

Soviet developments in the field of science and in other directions have presented a challenge which has obviously been worrying both parents and teachers in the United States. They are wondering whether there is not something wrong, perhaps, with their school system, and whether the Soviet Union has got hold of some ideas which are worth investigating.

The book *The Big Red Schoolhouse* was the first attempt to reassure the American public and now this one sets out to do the same, while at the same time trying to assess the Soviet educational system for the purpose of 'comparative education.' As H. C. Hunt puts it in the foreword, 'Education in the

## Under Soviet Skins

RONALD HINGLEY

The author, a lecturer in Russian at Oxford University and commentator on Soviet affairs for the *Sunday Times*, believes that the Soviet Union presents the most fascinating experiment in the history of human societies. "Warmly recommended to prospective visitors to the Soviet Union as a readable guide."—*The Guardian*.

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## Inside Russia Today

JOHN GUNTHER

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HAMISH HAMILTON

Soviet Union is apparently serving effectively the needs of that country, but its spirit and purpose are so contrary to the objectives our people and nation have for their schools and colleges as to make comparisons with the educational process in the United States difficult if not meaningless. Our emphasis, since the origin of the first school here, on freedom and individual initiative, resourcefulness and responsibility, makes it impossible to assess the respective merits of the two systems of education, so different in their basic concepts. This, to me, is starting off with a definite bias!

However, the group, which spent a month in the Soviet Union and visited Leningrad, Moscow, Kiev, and Tashkent, had many conferences with leading Soviet educationists, and attended a great many lessons in many different subjects in a fair number of schools. And as long as they quote Soviet specialists and describe situations they give interesting information. The charts on pages 10 and 11 give a good idea of the structure of the Soviet educational ladder, and the illustrations are appropriate and give an added visual picture.

The book is divided into three parts, Part 1 giving an historical and general picture, Part 2 dealing with each aspect of the present set-up, and Part 3 with special schools, out-of-school education and moral and character training. There are detailed notes, a selected bibliography, picture credits which show that the photographs were taken by members of the group, and an index.

There are numerous descriptions of discussions and of schools visited which are of great interest, but the value of the book is decreased by statements such as that about the visit to Tashkent, which could have been verified and found incorrect. I spent several weeks in Tashkent and so am able to say that a statement like this is quite contrary to the facts: '... the Russians discriminate against the Soviet Central Asians in virtually every aspect of life, especially in housing and education. In spite of egalitarian constitution, the Russians maintain separate schools for themselves and for the native Uzbeks or other Asians, thus bringing about the Russianisation of Asian culture and the neglect of the traditional cultures of the Asian peoples' (page 85).\*

This visit is intended to be the first of a series, and it is obvious that the members of the group did a tremendous lot of hard work before, during and after their tour, and that they genuinely desire to find out all they can about the Soviet educational system. They realise, too, that within so limited a time it was not possible to see enough to generalise. Let us hope that next time they will try to check up on some of the deductions they have made in their book, and also find out if some of their statements are really valid.

DEANA LEVIN

\* See article on Uzbekistan by the writer of this review.

## SOVIET COURTS

**Settling Disputes in Soviet Society: The Formative Years of Legal Institutions.**  
John N. Hazard. (Columbia University Press—OUP. 517 pp. 76/-)

THIS is the latest publication of the Russian Institute of Columbia University, written by Professor Hazard, who was for three and a half years a student of Soviet law in Moscow in the mid 1930s.

The text of 491 pages, the bibliography of 16 pages, with 10 pages of statutes and cases, are in the main concerned with the story of the foundation of Soviet courts in the first decade of Soviet power.

The thesis of the book is that those who shaped the Soviet courts started with the revolutionary object of setting up a simple pattern of people's courts with informal procedure, democratically based and enjoying considerable discretion. This dream was of short duration, and what emerged within the first decade was a complex pattern of courts, with formal procedure and subject to such central control as to deny any local discretion. The factors which destroyed the dream were realisation of a need for uniformity of procedure (which came after the resumption of foreign and internal trade under the new economic policy from 1921 onwards), the abuse of power locally by judges and state officials (whose sympathy for the new régime was so weak as to endanger its survival), and the concentration of political authority at the centre (which coincided with the federal constitution of 1923). This thesis is documented with the thoroughness which we associate with the work of Professor Hazard, and details of the argument will be of value not only to lawyers but to anyone interested in the story of the early years of the Soviet régime.

The work has obviously been long in preparation and has been helped by the publication in the Soviet Union in recent years of much source material not previously available. It covers, for example, much of the ground of Professor Golunskii's work published in Moscow in 1955. Its thesis seems irreconcilable with the most recent developments in the provisions in the Soviet Union for settling disputes. On page 481 Hazard writes: 'The task undertaken at the outset of this study was to test with Soviet data the thesis that modern man can settle his disputes with simplicity, as the Russian revolutionaries so evidently hoped to be able to do. It is tempting to conclude from the record that the formative years of the Soviet community have proved the necessity in all modern societies for complex structures of courts and fixed rules of procedure if disputes are to be settled without social unrest.' Speaking of 1925 he says: 'Gone were the days when a village elder or revolutionary enthusiast sat with his neighbours to hear their disputes and to resolve them without the help of state officials such as prosecutors or professional attorneys

licensed to practice (*sic*) their profession in aid of client and court.' These words are published at a time when, in the Soviet Union, comradely courts and people's detachments are in fact doing the very things which Hazard argues modern man in the modern state can no longer do.

Are these impossible revolutionary dreams of 1917 which were destroyed for ever in 1925? The fallacy of arguing from the concept of 'the modern state' was shown by Marx in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, and it is here a serious blemish in this otherwise very valuable work.

M. HOOKHAM.

## ASTRONAUTIC SOURCE-BOOK

**Soviet Writings on Earth Satellites and Space Travel.** (MacGibbon and Kee. 253pp. 18/-)

AS I write this review, the USSR has succeeded in placing the first man in space and returning him safely to earth. There is no need to labour the manner in which the dimensions of our earthbound society are being shaken as a result. What gave the Russians such a lead over the Americans is explained in this book, now at least four years old although first published in Britain just two years ago.

It is to be recommended as a source-book in the history of astronautics, and of the special Soviet contribution. It contains authoritative articles by such an internationally known astronautical expert as Ari Sternfeld, and by scientists such as Academician V. Ambartsumyan, Professor V. Dobronravov, and others.

The book makes clear why the rocket is the vehicle of choice as a spaceship, what paths are to be followed by spaceships, the significance of the artificial satellite, and the relationship between the trajectory of an orbital spaceship and the kind of observations that it can make on other planets.

As distinct from other books written by Russian experts, I found the book gives due credit to non-Russian experts.

For those who are interested in a trip to Venus, some details of how this is likely to be done and what might be expected to be found are given. The point I have often laboured is made clear—that we ought really to take the scientific statements of the Russians at their face value and not look behind them for some meaning which we ourselves wish to project into the statement. In other words, the Russians in their writings say what they mean.

The cost of interplanetary travel cannot be borne even by nations as wealthy as the USSR and the USA. It seems to me that interplanetary travel must become

## A Russian Childhood

*E. N. Vodovosova*

An English translation of part of the memoirs of E. N. Vodovosova, a pioneer of education reform and the emancipation of women. "Outstanding . . . one of the most vivid accounts of life in Old Russia that most of us will ever have come across outside fiction."

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—THE GUARDIAN.

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another unifying factor between the nations of this planet. Astronautics cannot remain the prestige-politics playground of the major powers. When we come to meet beings from other worlds—as we certainly shall—we shall have to greet them as representatives of the planet Earth and not of any particular nation.

All this the book makes clear, by implication if not directly.

MAURICE GOLDSMITH.

## EASIER BIRTH

**Painless Childbirth Through Psychoprophylaxis.** I. Velvosky, K. Platonov, V. Ploticher and E. Shugom. Trs. David A. Myshne. (FLPH. 417pp. Unpriced.)

ALTHOUGH in recent years a number of books have been published on psychosomatic childbirth, this is the first major study to appear; and it is fitting that it should come from the Soviet Union, in which the psychoprophylactic method was first evolved.

It is a comprehensive treatise in which the historical, theoretical and clinical aspects are surveyed in general and the Soviet method in particular. In four parts, the book commences with the genesis of psychoprophylaxis, the pioneer work of Grantly Dick Read being duly recognised and objectively examined. Part two is devoted to the methods of prophylactic training of the pregnant

woman, and this is followed by a discussion of the management of labour and the causes of failure. The remaining part brings to our notice the problems of organisation and the introduction into practice of psychoprophylaxis.

Particularly excellent and of great interest are the comparative statistics based on the results of several Soviet clinics. These show that the prepared patient has a shorter labour than the woman who has analgesics, or the unprepared patient without analgesics, and that there is a corresponding reduction in the number of perineal lacerations and post-partum haemorrhage.

Of great significance is the reduction in the incidence of asphyxia neonatorum, this for the prepared group being between 0.8 per cent and 3 per cent, 5.7 per cent where there was pharmacological relief of pain and 4.3 per cent in the unprepared group without analgesia. The neonatal and stillbirth rates were correspondingly lowered in the first group. In view of the importance of asphyxia neonatorum as a causative factor in cerebral birth injury, the value of psychoprophylaxis not only to the mother but to the child will be readily appreciated.

While the translation is excellent, it is to be hoped that in future editions the English bibliography will be extended to bring it into line with the Soviet one.

Professor Velvosky and his co-contributors are to be congratulated on producing this book, which should be compulsory reading for all obstetricians and gynaecologists.

A. T. MacNEIL.

## SCHOLARLY TEXTBOOK

**Russian Historical Grammar.** W. K. Matthews. (Athlone Press. 363pp. 45/-.)

THIS is a posthumous publication of the late professor of Russian of the London School of Slavonic and East European Studies. Conceived as a textbook for English-speaking students, it takes into account the possibility that many of them may be unfamiliar with linguistic theories in general. The two first chapters therefore summarise the main stages in the development of Indo-European linguistics and discuss the place of 'Common Slavonic' within the family of Indo-European languages. The author's vast erudition and his knowledge of a great number of languages enable him to brush a fascinating outline of the connections which can be traced between Sanskrit, Iranian, Greek, Italic, Celtic, Germanic, Baltic and Slavonic, and even Tocharian and Hittite.

The following chapter, entitled 'Historical Background', is less useful. The major historical events referred to are probably already known to students and, in any case, events which are important politically may be of much lesser consequence for the development of a language. For instance, whatever the political role of the Varangians

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**LAWRENCE AND WISHART**

may have been, their contribution to the development of Russian was no greater than that of the Normans to Old French or the dialects of Sicily. An event of far more material consequence, namely the Tartar conquest, resulted in only a small stock of loan words, some of which penetrated into Russian even at a later stage with the influx and assimilation of Tartar families into Muscovy (where they provided, incidentally, numerous surnames such as Aksakov, Yussupov, Urusov, etc.)

As to the reforms of Peter I, linguistically their importance lay in the new scientific and technical vocabulary which they brought in their wake. More lasting and subtle was the influence of Byzantium. Apart from numerous religious terms borrowed direct from the Greek, Church Slavonic translations contributed to the formation of Russian abstract terminology and profoundly affected the syntax of complex sentences. Later, Latin too found its way into Russian, first via Poland and from the 18th century via Germany, while the ubiquitous 18th-century French laid its imprint on both lexical and syntactical structure of modern Russian.

With 'Characteristics of Old Russian' we are at the heart of the matter, i.e. a description of Old Russian in so far as it can be reconstituted from 11th—and particularly 12th-century written texts, bearing in mind that many were written in Church Slavonic and that even documents drafted in the colloquial vernacular of the time may reflect variations characteristic of the speech of Novgorod, Smolensk or Kiev.

Changes that occurred in the course of the ensuing centuries are dealt with in Part II. Phonological changes are listed century by century, starting with the disappearance of nasal sounds (which, probably, preceded the introduction of literacy), the omission of the 'yery' in weak positions and their expansion into *e* and *o* under stress, etc. Morphological changes are noted under grammatical categories, viz. the early lapse of the vocative, the restricted use of the dual and its eventual disappearance in the 13-14th centuries; the decline of the imperfect and then of the aorist, and the ever-increasing importance of verbal aspects. There is no reference to the origin of idioms, but 18 pages are devoted to the development of styles; the paragraphs dealing with early texts provide a useful introductory outline, but those concerned with later centuries are inevitably sketchy.

Part III consists of three appendices: (a) 20 specimen passages of Russian prose from the middle of the 11th to the middle of the 20th centuries; (b) a concise history of Russian historical grammar; and (c) a classified and annotated bibliography which will be much valued by those who wish to pursue their studies further.

Students of Russian will welcome the great wealth of information to be found in this scholarly book, which will take its place among the standard works on the subject.

Judged as a textbook it suffers perhaps by its breadth of coverage, for on the one hand the author yields to the temptation of wandering beyond the pale of historical grammar into the wider field of the history of the language; and on the other the treatment of post-Petrine Russian cannot be compressed into a few laconic paragraphs; it must either be given adequate treatment or be omitted from a textbook the main interest of which lies in what Professor Matthews himself calls Old Russian as distinct from Modern Russian.

E.K.

## CHILDREN'S CORNER

**The Old Genie Hottabych.** Lazar Lagin. (FLPH. 310pp. Illus. Unpriced.)

**L**AZAR Lagin is something of a genius. To use the age-old theme of a genie coming out of a bottle might seem somewhat hackneyed. But when the genie is released from a clay vessel (where he has languished for nearly 2,000 years) into the bedroom of a young pioneer in a brand-new flat in the capital of the Soviet Union—well, really strange things happen!

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When he is presented with slaves, Volka is embarrassed and angry and tells the slaves they should be ashamed of themselves, crawling like that! When Hottabych produces three wonderful palaces, Volka is even more embarrassed. What can he do with three palaces? He thinks they look like the Komsolskaya station on the Metro and says they must belong to the Education Department.

The poor old genie not only becomes confused and hurt because his gifts are not appreciated, but he is terrified of things like trolleybuses and trains. Films send him into a panic—because he can see two of the film-stars sitting in their seats and at the same time larger than life on the screen—a kind of magic he has never heard of. He is also quite overwhelmed with the superior scientific knowledge of a modern Pioneer.

The book has everything from shipwrecks and magic carpets to astronomy and space travel.

Although written for Soviet children, it could do much to teach our children the values and attitudes of Soviet children as well as details of their daily life.

GLADYS KEABLE

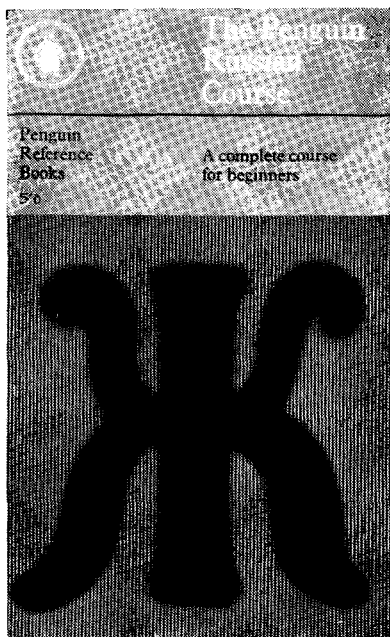
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